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Chapter III

CONSOLIDATION OF THE DIEM REGIME AND PRELIMINARIES TO THE
FRENCH WITHDRAWAL FROM VIETNAM, MAY 1955-APRIL 1956Summary

The decisions respecting Vietnam reached at the Paris NATO Ministerial Meeting by the United States and France, with British concurrence--namely, to give Diem full backing and gradually to eliminate the French military presence in Saigon--led to several important initiatives by Diem. Questioning French sincerity in what had been determined at Paris, Diem tried unsuccessfully to convene the foreign ministers of the three powers in Saigon in order to make their commitment more binding through South Vietnamese participation as an equal fourth party in their deliberations. Diem then set about arranging for the deposition of Bao Dai as Chief of State and the installation of himself as President of the Republic of Vietnam while at the same time inducing the French to accredit a full-fledged ambassador to Saigon. Finally, Diem launched what developed into desultory and then stalemated negotiations with the French regarding the terms under which the French Expeditionary Corps would leave Vietnam; for lack of progress on the diplomatic front, the French unilaterally repatriated the Corps and dissolved their military establishment in Saigon. With the departure of the French, the British, after obtaining the support of the United States, prevailed upon the Diem government to draw up a statement pledging South Vietnamese observance of the military and political provisions of the Geneva Accords.

The Vietnamese Proposal for a Four-Power Conference
in Saigon as a Follow-up to the Paris Talks

Immediately upon the conclusion of the tripartite talks in Paris, the Diem Government formally proposed, in approaches made in both Saigon and Paris on May 13, that a quadripartite (U.S.-U.K.-France-Vietnam) conference be held in Saigon to arrive at increased mutual understanding. No date was specified for the opening session.¹

¹From Saigon, tel. 5249, May 13, 1955, limited official use; from Paris, tel. 4964, May 13, 1955, secret.

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Dulles first learned about this proposal from the new French Foreign Minister, Antoine Pinay, on the following day, when both were in Vienna in connection with the signing of the Austrian State Treaty. According to Dulles, Pinay favored the idea, and Dulles himself thought it might have merit.¹

The suggestion for such a four-power meeting apparently originated within Diem's official family. Tillman Durdin, New York Times correspondent, told the American Embassy in Saigon that the idea had been germinating in the mind of Diem's brother, Ngo Dinh Nhu, for some time. Nhu had first mentioned the matter in a conversation early in May.² On the other hand, Michel Wintrebert, Acting French High Commissioner, informed the American Chargé in Saigon, Randolph A. Kidder, on May 19 that the idea originated with Nguyen Huu Chau, brother-in-law of Madame Nhu and at this time Minister-Delegate to the Presidency, in which capacity he was one of Diem's principal advisers. According to Wintrebert, Chau envisaged the quadrilateral meeting as a means of strengthening Diem's internal political position, especially vis-à-vis the Hao Hoa sect.³

Diem's brother, Ngo Dinh Luyen, South Vietnam's roving Ambassador in Europe, maintained contact with the American Embassy in Paris on the subject. On May 14, he stressed the importance of this initiative for Vietnam's international position and pointed out that the proposed conference should (1) make clear that Vietnam was no longer prepared to accept or have decisions regarding Vietnam made without its participation, (2) give consideration to South Vietnam's role in defending a vital link in the Free World defense perimeter, and (3) consider strategy to be pursued by South Vietnam with respect to elections under the Geneva Accords.⁴ In the next

¹From Vienna, tel. DULTE 44, May 14, 1955, secret.

²From Saigon, tel. 5377, May 20, 1955, secret.

³From Saigon, tel. 5368, May 19, 1955, secret.

⁴From Paris, tel. 4979, May 16, 1955, secret.

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few days, Luyen emphasized that the Vietnamese Government attached great significance to having the conference take place at the Foreign Minister level.¹

French officials indicated to the American Embassy in Paris, on May 14, that the French Government was prepared to accept Diem's proposal, but that it favored holding the conference at the Ambassadorial rather than Foreign Minister level.² Within the week, French officials expressed the opinion that a quadrilateral conference in Saigon could be used to present to the Vietnamese Government the common views of the United States, the United Kingdom, and France on the start of consultations between North and South Vietnam on July 20, 1955, to prepare the way for nationwide elections a year later, as set forth in the Geneva settlement.³

Washington, however, displayed a marked lack of enthusiasm for the Vietnamese proposal. While seeking additional information as to what Diem hoped to accomplish by such a conference and what the agenda would be, the Department instructed the Embassy in Saigon, on May 19, to point out to Diem that, in light of the understanding of support for Diem worked out at the tripartite talks just concluded in Paris, the conference might have a limiting effect on freedom of action of both Vietnam and the United States. The Department stated that the United States, having established the principle of flexibility at the Paris talks, "would be disinclined to engage in a conference in Saigon which might restrict our independent action by reason of multilateral understandings." The Department added that, if there were particular subjects which Vietnam wanted to take up with the French or the United States, it would be better to do so on a bilateral rather than a multilateral

¹From Paris, tels. 5035 and 5076, May 18 and 20, 1955, both secret.

²From Paris, tel. 4967, May 14, 1955, secret.

³From Paris, tels. 5080 and 5104, May 20 and 23, 1955, both secret. The Department instructed Ambassador Dillon, on May 27, to avoid being drawn into three-power consultations based on the assumption of developing a common U.S.-U.K.-French policy for four-power talks in Saigon.

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basis.¹ Following a meeting with Diem on May 21, the Chargé replied that neither Diem nor Chau had fully reflected on the points made by the Department.²

Kidder had a meeting with Chau two days later, at which the latter outlined the following possible subjects for discussion at the quadrilateral conference: (1) common policy against the Viet Minh and clarification of the attitudes of the three Western Powers concerning consultations and elections under the Geneva Accords; (2) military relations with France and the United States, including a possible "military treaty with France and a tie-in to Manila Pact"; (3) discussion of elections for the National Assembly and, possibly, the problem of the future of Bao Dai; and (4) general support of the three Western Powers for the Vietnamese Government's reform program.³

After receiving these Vietnamese views as to a suggested agenda for the proposed conference, the Department instructed Ambassador Reinhardt (newly arrived at his post, on May 26) to stress to Diem that Washington continued to feel that an independent United States policy, rather than joint U.S.-U.K.-French action, might be "of more help to sovereign Vietnam". Washington reiterated that its freedom of action would be diminished if the conference were held with the idea of attempting to achieve a common policy and that it was in Diem's interest to handle outstanding issues with France on a bilateral basis. The Department also suggested that a four-power conference at the Ambassadorial level might be held after a National Assembly had been formed and that Diem, having thus received popular backing, would be in a strong position at such a conference, which might take up the question of consultations and all-Vietnamese elections under the Geneva settlement.

¹To Saigon, tel. 5140, May 19, 1955, secret.

²From Saigon, tel. 5403, May 21, 1955, secret.

³From Saigon, tel. 5428, May 23, 1955, secret.

⁴To Saigon, tel. 5265, May 27, 1955, secret.

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The French Foreign Ministry indicated to the American Embassy in Paris on June 1, however, that it believed it was urgent to get the Saigon conference under way in the immediate future as a means of tackling the question of consultations and elections.¹ The following day, Ambassador Dillon reported that the Quai d'Orsay had indications that Diem was pushing less actively than theretofore for a four-power conference, and the Ambassador reinforced this with the information that, according to the British Embassy in Paris, the British Ambassador in Saigon had similarly noted Diem's slackening interest in a conference.²

Confirmation of the decline of Vietnamese enthusiasm also came from Saigon. Ambassador Reinhardt reported on June 2 that, when he had brought up the question of the four-power conference in a conversation with the Vietnamese Foreign Minister, the latter had expressed the view that solution of the problem of military and political relations with the French had first priority. Following a conversation with Diem two days later, Reinhardt informed the Department that, although Diem was not pressing for an early meeting, it was clear that he wished to use the proposal for the conference as a "lever" on the French to force regularization of the status of the French Expeditionary Corps in Vietnam as well as to obtain a definition of the nature of the Manila Pact commitment to the defense of Vietnam against the Viet Minh.⁴

At a meeting with Diem on June 7, Reinhardt outlined the United States position on elections under the Geneva settlement. This position was that consultations between North and South Vietnam should be held and that Saigon should insist on guarantees for free elections. At this meeting, Diem commented that he believed French support for his government was half-

¹From Paris, tel. 5275, June 1, 1955, secret.

²From Paris, tel. 5283, June 2, 1955, confidential.

³From Saigon, tel. 5601, June 2, 1955, secret.

⁴From Saigon, tel. 5643, June 4, 1955, secret. For a detailed account of Diem's attitude with respect to the proposed four-power conference, see tel. 5677 from Saigon, June 6, 1955, secret.

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hearted, and that the British had not committed themselves publicly to him. He explained that one of the objectives of the proposed four-power conference would be to give the legal government of Free Vietnam the benefit of public and full support of the other three participants. When Reinhardt commented that moving into the problem of elections immediately after a four-power conference would give the Viet Minh an excellent propaganda weapon, Diem replied that a conference would not be necessary as long as the three powers had an agreed policy of support of the Diem Government.¹

The Deposition of Bao Dai

Having decided that there was no longer an immediate need for a four-power conference to brighten his international image, Diem turned his attention to strengthening his position at home. He felt insecure as long as Bao Dai remained Chief of State. The question posed was how and when to **depose** the former Emperor.

Shortly after the Geneva Conference, both Washington and Paris had come to general agreement that Bao Dai would eventually have to go at such time as Diem had convened a National Assembly which could assume the former royal powers. The two capitals had agreed that, in the interim period, Bao Dai could serve usefully as a symbol, for he represented legitimacy, had the power to appoint the Prime Minister, and was willing to accept advice. As long as Bao Dai brought his influence to bear in support of Diem as Prime Minister and did not interfere appreciably in governmental operations, in the view of the United States and France, he played a useful role in the anti-Communist struggle in Vietnam. The United States made it clear to the French, however, that its agreement to the temporary retention of Bao Dai as Chief of State of Vietnam was predicated on the assumption that the former Emperor would not return to Saigon--out of deference to Diem's wishes in the matter.²

Though restive under the nominal restraint Bao Dai represented, Diem did not make an issue out of his sovereign's strange position until the spring of 1955 when, following the outbreak of

¹From Saigon, tel. 5711, June 7, 1955, secret.

²From Paris, tel. 366, July 27, and to Paris, tel. 1138 (1245 to Saigon), Sept. 28, 1954, both secret.

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hostilities between Diem and the Binh Xuyen set in April, a "People's Revolutionary Committee" called for the deposition of Bao Dai.¹ During the political turmoil, Diem asked, in Saigon and in Washington, whether he could expect full and immediate United States support should he depose Bao Dai and form a new government with the full support of the Diem and the Army.² Washington advised against such action. The Department instructed General Collins in Saigon on May 3 to suggest to Diem that reliance on the Revolutionary Committee to depose Bao Dai could set a precedent and open the way for a later removal of Diem by the same or a similar group, including the Viet-Minh. The Department pointed out that authority over the Vietnamese Army was the crucial factor and that Diem might consider carefully how Bao Dai might serve to consolidate Diem's authority. The Department added: "To proceed with proposed action before Diem is assured of solid backing of Vietnamese people might open door to greater confusion, set government adrift in uncontrollable currents, and lead to ultimate Viet Minh triumph through subversion and infiltration."³

Collins, who, prior to receiving the Department's instructions, had already made similar representations to Diem on a personal basis,⁴ conveyed the Department's position officially to Diem on May 4. Collins stated that the overthrow of Bao Dai by the Revolutionary Committee was a highly dangerous procedure and cited the case of Kerensky during the Russian Revolution of 1917. Collins again urged Diem to use his influence to restrain the Revolutionary Committee and to await the election of a National Assembly which might properly represent the will of the people. Collins came away from this conversation with the

¹From Saigon, tel. 4948, May 1, 1955, secret.

²From Saigon, tel. 4985, May 1, 1955, secret; memorandum by Young (PSA) of conversation with Tran Van Chuong, Vietnamese Ambassador, May 2, 1955, confidential.

³To Saigon, tel. 4867 (3921 to Paris), May 3, 1955, secret. Paris, likewise, was opposed to deposition of Bao Dai by revolutionary means (from Paris, tel. 4820, May 5, 1955, secret).

⁴From Saigon, tel. 5047, May 4, 1955, secret.

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the impression that Diem would exercise a moderating influence on those demanding the deposition of Bao Dai at that time.¹

At the beginning of June 1955, shortly after he arrived in Saigon, Ambassador Reinhardt reported that it looked as if Diem were determined to deal with the Bao Dai question before convening a National Assembly and might resort to a referendum.² At the end of the month, the Vietnamese Foreign Minister, Vu Van Mau, told Reinhardt that a Cabinet decision might be forthcoming soon on holding a referendum to depose Bao Dai.³

Washington was somewhat disturbed and instructed Reinhardt to explain to Diem the pitfalls of such action. The Department pointed out that the deposition of Bao Dai by other than a legislative forum was a potential danger to Free Vietnam and might cause trouble; that action by a National Assembly would be accepted as an expression of national sentiment and not as actions of a clique which could be easily attacked; and that, if Diem's cabinet "simply votes deposition and attempts to carry it out," it would be in "no more sound a legal status than Revolutionary Committee, which has already so voted." The Department added that the opportunity for competitive rump committees to vote the removal of Diem or adopt resolutions favoring the Viet Minh or the sects would be greatly enhanced. The Department concluded that, in such an event, the outcome would be determined by comparative military strength rather than by the existing legality of the Government and that the United States "would have grave difficulty in making effective its aid and support under those circumstances."⁴

Reinhardt made his representations to Diem on July 5. Diem stated that there was no question of the Government's acting by decree on the subject of Bao Dai but that there was a great deal of pressure in political circles for him to take some action and that a referendum seemed the best way to meet the situation. Diem also said that, until the Bao Dai question had been resolved, it would be impossible to develop a healthy political climate.

¹From Saigon, tel. 5054, May 4, 1955, secret.

²From Saigon, tel. 5609, June 2, 1955, secret.

³From Saigon, tel. 6041, June 29, 1955, secret.

⁴To Saigon, tel. 8, July 1, 1955, secret.

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Reinhardt commented to the Department that he was not entirely convinced by Diem's assertion that he himself was not really in a hurry but that others were pushing him very hard.¹

The idea of handling the Bao Dai issue by referendum continued to be held strongly by Diem and his immediate entourage.² On September 7, Diem made clear to Alexandre Raymond Crepault, outgoing Canadian political representative on the International Control Commission, his determination to hold such a referendum.³ A fortnight later, Pham Dang Lam, Director of Political Affairs of the Vietnamese Foreign Ministry, told an officer of the American Embassy that the date of October 23 had been set for the referendum so that the results might be known before the Quadripartite Foreign Ministers meeting in Geneva. He said that the announcement to this effect would be made soon.⁴

In a private conversation on September 26, Diem told Reinhardt that the referendum would be held on two questions: (1) deposition of Bao Dai and (2) designation of Diem as Chief of State with the mission to organize a democratic regime. He also indicated that this referendum would be followed by a second referendum in November to approve a draft constitution and by-elections, possibly late in December, for a National Assembly. Reinhardt commented to the Department that, since Diem was determined to proceed with this program, it was unlikely that the United States could bring about any modification without the exertion of the greatest pressure.⁵ The Department, albeit reluctantly, accepted this program and concurred in Reinhardt's

¹From Saigon, tel. 47, July 5, 1955, secret.

²From Saigon, tel. 494, July 29, 1955, secret.

³From Saigon, tel. 1155, Sept. 8, 1955, confidential.

⁴From Saigon, tel. 1366, Sept. 22, 1955, secret. The Department had announced, on August 11, that the meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the United States, the United Kingdom, the USSR, and France, would convene at Geneva on October 27 (Department of State Bulletin, Aug. 22, 1955, p. 301).

⁵From Saigon, tels. 1468 and 1483, Sept. 28 and 29, 1955, both secret.

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judgment that the proposed steps were preferable in the absence of any national legislative body, constitution, or settlement of the Bao Dai problem.¹

The date on which the referendum on Bao Dai would be held was announced officially on October 6, after a Government-inspired press campaign against the Chief of State had been launched.² So far as Washington was concerned, there was no doubt that Diem would win in the referendum and that the United States would recognize the new government.³ The United States position was explained to representatives of the British, Australian, Canadian, and New Zealand Embassies in Washington on October 19.⁴ The British Foreign Office indicated to the American Embassy in London on the same day that Britain would likewise recognize the new government.⁵ The French position was that there was no need for a new act of recognition, for the referendum did not constitute a change in regime but only in personality.⁶

Bao Dai expressed his criticism of the referendum and of Diem's actions in a note delivered to the French Government and to United States, British, Indian, and Soviet representatives in Paris on October 13.⁷ Bao Dai followed this up by a decree

¹To Saigon, tel. 1192, Oct. 6, 1955, secret.

²From Saigon, tel. 1578, Oct. 7, 1955, limited official use.

³To Saigon, tel. 1339, Oct. 18, 1955, secret.

⁴Memorandum by Kattenburg (PSA) of conversation among Wade (New Zealand), Joy (British), Rowland (Australian), and McCardle (Canadian) Embassies, Oct. 19, 1955, secret.

⁵From London, tel. 1578, Oct. 19, 1955, secret.

⁶To Paris, tel. 1527, Oct. 19, 1955; from Paris, tel. 1918, Oct. 20, 1955; both confidential. The Quai d'Orsay since July had regarded Bao Dai "as just another political refugee in France with [the] distinction that he is still legally Chief of State of Vietnam until legal action is taken in Vietnam either to depose or replace him" (from Paris, tel. 378, July 26, 1955, secret).

⁷From Paris, tel. 1721, Oct. 13, 1955, confidential.

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of October 18, withdrawing civil and military powers from Diem and removing him from the Prime Ministership.¹ This action caused some concern to the Department.² The French Embassy in Washington informed the Department on the 19th that Paris took the position that Bao Dai's dismissal of Diem was an internal Vietnamese affair.³ The Department issued a statement on October 20 stating that it continued to support the Government of Free Vietnam under Diem, that the referendum was a purely internal matter, and that it was not commenting on personalities, for such action "would appear as involvement in Free Viet-Nam's internal affairs."

The outcome of the referendum was a foregone conclusion. According to the Vietnamese Foreign Office, 98.2% of those participating voted for Diem as Chief of State, as against 1.1% for Bao Dai.⁵ The initial conclusions of the American Embassy in Saigon were that the referendum proved a resounding success for the Diem Government and that the results of the referendum made it unlikely that Bao Dai would be able to play a significant role in the future.⁶ Subsequently, however, the Embassy characterized the referendum as "in one sense a travesty on democratic procedures", for all propaganda had been under the control of Diem's forces, and the other side had not been permitted to make its case.⁷

After the Vietnamese Foreign Office had informed the American Embassy, on October 26, of the outcome of the referendum and the elevation of Diem to the office of Chief of State,

¹From Paris, tel. 1853, Oct. 18, 1955, official use only.

²To Paris, tel. 1524 (1357 to Saigon), Oct. 19, 1955, confidential.

³To Saigon, tel. 1358 (2144 to London, 1527 to Paris), Oct. 19, 1955, confidential.

⁴To Paris, tel. 1549, Oct. 20, 1955, unclassified.

⁵From Saigon, tel. 1849, Oct. 26, 1955, confidential.

⁶From Saigon, tel. 1846, Oct. 25, 1955, secret.

⁷From Saigon, desp. 146, Nov. 29, 1955, confidential.

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Ambassador Reinhardt, under instructions, replied that the United States Government looked forward to maintaining friendly relations with the new Government of Vietnam. In a press release issued the same day, the Department stated that it was glad "to see the evolution of orderly and effective democratic processes in an area of Southeast Asia which has been and continues to be threatened by Communist efforts to impose totalitarian control."¹

Pursuant to the scenario prepared in advance,² Diem, in his new capacity, received the Diplomatic and Consular Corps, as well as Vietnamese functionaries and notables, at the palace at 4:00 p.m., the same day. The French Ambassador, Henri Hoppenot, was personally attending his first official government function since his arrival in August. The British Ambassador, Hugh S. Stephenson, as Dean of the Diplomatic Corps, in a sympathetic speech, congratulated Diem on the assumption of the office of Chief of State. Stephenson pointedly said that the friends of Vietnam would watch with greatest interest the establishment of a constitution and of democratic institutions. Diem, in reply, committed himself to the establishment of a constitution and the election of a National Assembly before the end of the year.³

On the evening of October 26, the Vietnamese Foreign Office sent the American Embassy a copy of a "Provisional Constitution Act" issued by Diem which entered into force immediately, proclaiming the State of Vietnam a Republic with Diem as President.⁴ The elimination of Bao Dai as a factor on the political scene in South Vietnam was thereby complete.

¹Department of State Bulletin, Nov. 7, 1955, p. 760. Other Missions in Saigon were also sent similar notifications. Before receiving the official notification of the new order of things, the Department, in response to a question at the daily press conference on October 24, had prematurely stated that it recognized Diem as the Chief of State (to Saigon, tel. 1436, Oct. 25, 1955, confidential).

²From Saigon, tel. 1836, Oct. 25, 1955, secret.

³From Saigon, tel. 1855, Oct. 26, 1955, official use only.

⁴From Saigon, tel. 1857, Oct. 27, 1955, unclassified.

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Designation of a French High Commissioner
to the State of Vietnam

Another of the moves made by Diem to build up the prestige of his government was to persuade the French to send to Saigon a full-fledged ambassador accredited to the State of Vietnam only. An opportunity to bring this about came when, upon receipt of new instructions from Paris reflecting the decisions of Vietnam made at the NATO Ministerial Meeting, General Ely resigned as Commissioner-General in something of a huff, feeling that he could not, in true conscience, carry them out. Ely departed Saigon on June 2, leaving his political deputy, Michel Wintrebert, responsible for the conduct of relations with the Diem government and General Pierre Jacquot in command of the French Expeditionary Corps.¹

To succeed Ely, the Quai d'Orsay selected Henri Hoppenot, French Permanent Representative at the United Nations, and named him "French Ambassador on Special Mission to the Associated States with residence in Saigon".² The Saigon Government objected to this title, for it wanted Hoppenot accredited only to Vietnam. The French feared that such a designation might be interpreted as meaning "all Vietnam" and encouraged Hanoi to make approaches to Hoppenot. They therefore devised the title "Ambassador-in-Residence at Saigon" and urged the United States to influence Diem to accept it. While recognizing the validity of the French arguments and the strength of French feelings about the Hoppenot appointment, the Department of State took the position that it was preferable for the United States not to become involved in this issue.³

In consultation with Vietnamese representatives in Paris, the French then worked out a new formula which read:

¹Paul Ely, Mémoires, vol. I, L'Indochine dans la tourmente (Paris, 1964), pp. 316-317; from Saigon, tel. 5402, May 21, and tel. 5599, June 2, 1955, both secret.

²From Saigon, tel. 5753, June 10, 1955, secret; from Paris, tel. 5528, June 17, 1955, confidential.

³From Paris, tel. 5601, June 21, and to Saigon, tel. 5595 (4603 to Paris), June 23, 1955, both secret.

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"Hoppenot, Ambassador of France, is appointed Ambassador on Special Mission. He is entrusted with the functions of High Commissioner of the French Republic near the State of Vietnam."

The Saigon Government repudiated its envoys, taking particular umbrage at the title "High Commissioner".¹ It demanded that Hoppenot (1) be styled "Ambassador to the State of Vietnam", (2) have no jurisdiction over the French Expeditionary Corps and limit himself to civil-diplomatic functions, and (3) have no duties outside Vietnam. French officials were disturbed by this development and considered the Vietnamese demands as inadmissible interference in French internal affairs and as an infringement of French sovereignty, besides being a breach of faith on the part of the Vietnamese Government.²

The issue was finally resolved with the acceptance by both the French and the Vietnamese of the formula which stated: "Mr. Hoppenot, Ambassador on Extraordinary Mission, is named High Commissioner of the French Republic to the State of Vietnam". The French requested of Diem on July 20 the agrément for Hoppenot's appointment,³ and Hoppenot, in his capacity as High Commissioner to the State of Vietnam presented his letters of credence to Diem on August 16, thereby bringing to an end the office of Commissioner-General of France in Indochina.⁴

Developments Leading to Dissolution of the
French High Command in Vietnam

Concurrently with his efforts to obtain a semblance of full diplomatic recognition of Vietnam by France, Diem undertook to negotiate the future status of the French Expeditionary Corps in Vietnam and sent his adviser, Nguyen Huu Chau, to Paris in

¹From Paris, tel. 27, July 2, secret, tel. 37, July 5, confidential, and from Saigon, tel. 119, July 10, 1955, secret.

²From Paris, tel. 183, July 12, 1955, secret.

³From Saigon, tel. 312, July 20, and from Paris, tel. 338, July 22, 1955, both confidential.

⁴From Saigon, desp. 68, Sept. 6, 1955, limited official use.

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June 1955 for this purpose. In a letter delivered to Chau on July 2, Premier Faure indicated the French Government's willingness to discuss the issue and suggested that the details be worked out by negotiating teams of experts. Equipped with this letter, Chau thereupon returned to Saigon.¹

Accordingly, the Vietnamese Government organized a delegation headed by Deputy Minister of Defense Tran Trong Dung, and including Chau, Diem's brother Ngo Dinh Nhu, and General Nguyen Don of the Vietnamese General Staff, which flew to Paris on August 12 for military talks scheduled to open on the 17th.² The talks no sooner began than they broke down over the South Vietnamese demand, which the delegates privately admitted they knew would not be met, for a letter from Premier Faure to Diem stating that (1) the French Expeditionary Corps, within the SEATO framework, was prepared to stand with South Vietnam in defense of the Free World and (2) France recognized the right of South Vietnam to seek and determine conditions for the unification of Vietnam. Nhu went so far as to tell American Embassy officials in Paris that, if the French were not prepared to make such a commitment to the Diem Government publicly, the Vietnamese would blame them for the breakdown of the talks.³ Chau talked in terms of asking the French to withdraw the Expeditionary Corps altogether.

The French Foreign Ministry informed the American Embassy that it would be impossible for the French Government to give written assurances of the nature desired by the Vietnamese and that France, as a signatory of the cease-fire agreement, could not agree to use the Expeditionary Corps in support of a policy openly opposed to the Geneva Accords. Premier Faure did send a letter to Diem, however, under the date of September 21, stating that France was prepared to begin negotiations on the transfer of powers and responsibilities to the Vietnamese High Command. The letter also made clear that the French were ready to begin

¹From Paris, tel. 27, July 2, 1955, secret.

²From Saigon, tels. 694 and 732, Aug. 10 and 12, 1955, secret.

³From Paris, tels. 1115 and 1259, Sept. 10 and 19, 1955, secret.

DECLASSIFIED

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-127-

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conversations on the terms of withdrawal of the Expeditionary Corps and to give consideration, if the Vietnamese requested it, to the possible retention of a residual force in South Vietnam.¹

Washington took the position (and instructed the Embassy in Paris to pass the word to the Vietnamese delegation) that complete withdrawal of the Expeditionary Corps would create a dangerous vacuum if carried out before the Vietnamese had become sufficiently trained and experienced to assume French military responsibilities.² These instructions reached Paris a bit late, for the Vietnamese delegation, on its own authority, had immediately pronounced Faure's letter to Diem unsatisfactory in that it failed to provide the desired assurances. Nhu went so far as to say that the only alternative was to negotiate with the French the departure of the entire Expeditionary Corps.³

Embassy Paris requested fresh instructions, and the Department replied that, since the Vietnamese had adopted their stand without benefit of advice from the United States, there was little point in offering them American views. Furthermore, the Department stated, if the French should attempt to secure American intervention in the negotiations with the Vietnamese, the Embassy should beg a hands-off policy.⁴

The French, too, became balky, contending that they could not possibly give Diem the assurances he wanted and that they would not predicate their policy in Vietnam, or anywhere else, on support of any given individual. The Faure government informed the American Embassy, however, that it was prepared to proceed with the military talks at such time as the Vietnamese

¹From Paris, tels. 1277 and 1357, Sept. 19 and 23, 1955, secret.

²To Paris, tel. 1105 (977 to Saigon), Sept. 21, 1955, secret.

³From Paris, tel. 1336, Sept. 22, 1955, secret.

⁴To Paris, tel. 1161 (1025 to Saigon), Sept. 24, 1955, secret.

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should ask that they begin.¹ Chau, under instruction from Saigon, called Faure's bluff by delivering to him, on October 5, a letter requesting the French to set a date for opening the talks. Faure told Nhu and Chau that the talks could not begin until the two French officers arrested back in August for attempting to set off explosives in downtown Saigon had been turned over to French custody.² Diem recalled Nhu on October 15 and Chau and the remainder of the Vietnamese delegation on the 18th.

The French in Saigon admitted that the case of the two officers was but a pretext to cover Paris' reluctance to enter negotiations at that time. Such a confession set machinery in motion to get things off dead center. The British Ambassador, Hugh Stephenson, cabled London to bring pressure on the French. At the request of Ambassador Reinhardt, French High Commissioner Henri Hoppenot recommended to Paris that the French propose an early, specific date for starting the talks. Finally, the Department of State urged the French Embassy in Washington to lend its influence with Paris, for, though not directly involved, the United States would be affected by the outcome of the negotiations.³

The French continued to procrastinate. At the same time, without any agreement with the Vietnamese Government, they were pulling the Expeditionary Corps out of Vietnam at a very rapid rate--indeed, the pace was so swift that officials in both Paris and Saigon acknowledged that there would soon be nothing to negotiate about.⁴

There was, however, the matter of the turn-over of French military properties to the Vietnamese. Ambassador Reinhardt got the impression that the French were working up an enormous bill to present the Saigon authorities in order to have a stronger

¹From Paris, tel. 1470, Sept. 30, 1955, secret.

²From Paris, tels. 1575 and 1591, Oct. 6, 1955, secret.

³From Saigon, tels. 1799 and 1832, Oct. 23 and 25, 1955, secret; to Paris, tel. 1704 (1467 to Saigon), Oct. 27, 1955, confidential.

⁴From Paris, tel. 1986, Oct. 24, 1955, secret; from Saigon, tel. 1984, Nov. 5, 1955, confidential.

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position at such time as negotiations began. The Vietnamese, on the other hand, realizing that the French would eventually have just to abandon their bases, were in no hurry to agree on terms.¹

In exasperation, the South Vietnamese Government on January 19, 1956, formally requested the withdrawal of the entire French Expeditionary Corps. On March 19 the French notified the International Control Commission of agreement reached with the Vietnamese on the pull-out of all French combat troops by April 15 and of all "ancillary" forces by June 30. At the request of the British, the French agreed to postpone until April 28 the dissolution of the High Command and the return of General Jacquot to Paris--the British did not wish this action taken until the pending talks with the Russian Co-Chairman of the Geneva Conference had been concluded.²

While getting rid of the Expeditionary Corps, the Vietnamese asked for the retention of a small French training cadre. Paris and Saigon settled for 9 officers to be assigned to the Vietnamese Army School, 60 officers and 280 noncommissioned officers for air training, and 8 officers and 11 noncoms for the Navy.³

As of the end of the year, final negotiations on military property questions were still in abeyance. The chief stumbling bloc was the desire of the French to keep their naval arsenal in Saigon and their installations at Cam Ranh Bay. With respect to the remaining properties, as French Defense Minister Bourges-Maunury told the National Assembly in late July, "the installations which have been ceded to the Vietnamese have been so until now with reservations of our rights."⁴

¹From Saigon, tel. 2258, Nov. 27, 1955, secret.

²From Saigon, tel. 3826, Mar. 20, tel. 3998, Apr. 2, and tel. 4067, Apr. 7, 1956, all secret; aide-mémoire, British Embassy, Washington, Mar. 24, 1956, confidential.

³Memorandum of conversation among Ministers Lucet and Millet (French Embassy), Sebald (FE), and Kocher and Kattenburg (SEA), Apr. 9, 1956, secret.

⁴From Saigon, tel. 4068, Apr. 7, 1956, secret; from Paris, desp. 288, Aug. 14, 1956, secret.

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Negotiation of the South Vietnamese Unilateral
Declaration of Intent To Uphold the Geneva
Settlement

The break-up of the French military establishment in Vietnam raised the obvious question as to who, on the non-Communist side, would thenceforth be guarantor of observance of the cease-fire. As early as November 1955, the British sounded out the United States about the possibility of persuading the French and South Vietnamese Governments to arrive at an agreement by which Saigon would formally take over French responsibilities under the Geneva Accords--at least the military provisions thereof. Barring such agreement, the British suggested, Diem might issue a statement to the effect that, while he did not consider his government bound by the 1954 agreements, he would be prepared, in the interests of his nation and of peace in Southeast Asia, to ask the Vietnamese High Command to assume the functions exercised by the French. The British feared that, if no statement were made, the French might propose reconvening the Geneva Conference, whose decisions might cause irreparable damage to the position of South Vietnam and of its leader.¹

To determine the feasibility of making an approach to Diem along the lines suggested by the British, the Department of State explored with the American Embassies in Paris and Saigon the possibility of reducing the number of military functions the Vietnamese might be asked to take over from the French. The Department asked specifically if the Joint Armistice Commission might not be abolished.² Ambassador Reinhardt replied from Saigon that termination of the Commission would probably require unanimous action to amend Article 41 of the Cease-Fire Agreement, and he doubted that the Viet Minh and Poles would assent. Reinhardt also gave his opinion that the Vietnamese should not be asked to replace the French on the Joint Armistice Commission because the Viet Minh were "only too eager to get the Vietnamese involved in direct negotiations."

¹From London, tel. 1941, Nov. 10, and tel. 1999, Nov. 15, 1955, both confidential.

²To Saigon, tel. 1743 (1992 to Paris, 2809 to London), Nov. 18, 1955, secret.

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Reinhardt expected the Diem government to favor continuing the provisions of the cease-fire without, however, assuming any formal responsibilities, either military or political. The Vietnamese took the position that, since it had been the French and not the South Vietnamese who had signed the Cease-Fire Agreement, the Saigon authorities could not juridically replace the French, even though failure to do so might result in the withdrawal of the International Control Commission and referral of the matter to the Geneva Conference Co-Chairmen. The Vietnamese had expressed a willingness to provide logistic and security support for the ICC but not the maintenance costs. Therefore, Reinhardt argued, in view of Diem's readiness to cooperate informally, pressure should be brought to bear on the French (rather than on the Vietnamese) to maintain the status quo until such time as it would be appropriate to terminate the functions of the Control Commission.¹

In Paris, Ambassador Dillon called on South Vietnamese Foreign Minister Vu Van Mau and discovered that, with regard to the question of Vietnamese assumption of military responsibilities under the Cease-Fire Agreement and the problem of providing security for the ICC, Mau discounted their importance. The Foreign Minister maintained that the military provisions of the armistice arrangement had been carried out. He saw no further need for the Control Commission and, in fact, went so far as to say that an early "fold-up" and departure of the ICC would not be regarded by the Vietnamese as an "unfavorable development".²

From London, Ambassador Aldrich reported the view of the British Ambassador in Saigon that it would be undesirable to ask the French to retain formal responsibility for enforcement of the cease-fire because (a) withdrawal of the French Expeditionary Corps from Vietnam would make it impossible for the French to perform this function, (b) such a role assigned to the French would amount to infringement of Vietnamese sovereignty, and (c) an arrangement of this kind would not relieve the Western Powers of their own responsibilities. The Foreign Office stressed this last point, for it was of the opinion that the Western

¹From Saigon, tel. 2206, Nov. 23, 1955, secret.

²From Paris, tel. 2510, Nov. 23, 1955, confidential.

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control U.S. military personnel in Vietnam. The Department was therefore inclined to agree with the thoughts about the Commission which Mau had conveyed to Dillon in Paris.¹

The Embassy in Paris went along with the Department. Ambassador Reinhardt in Saigon, on the other hand, took vigorous exception. He reported his opinion that the Department's evaluation of the situation seemed to forecast an "important departure from the U.S. position to date". He pointed out that, during the previous six months, often at the Department's suggestion, he had urged the Vietnamese Government to comply with the minimum requirements of the cease-fire and to hold consultations with the Viet Minh on elections in order to retain the presence and good-will of the International Control Commission and the support of international opinion--particularly British, French, and Indian.

Disputing the Department's feeling about the Geneva Accords, Reinhardt maintained that the articles of the Cease-Fire Agreement relating to the demarcation line (and particularly Article 10, which called for enforcement of the cease-fire) were among the "most important remaining provisions with respect to Vietnam's security". Recalling the Department's own statement that the Control Commission was of use as an "international body which would be a neutral observer already on the spot in case of Viet Minh aggression," Reinhardt reminded the Department of the value to the United States, in terms of Asian opinion, of the verdict handed down in 1950 labelling North Korea as the aggressor, rendered by an on-the-spot U.N. commission which included Indian representatives.

Reinhardt concluded that it was essential that, prior to July 1956, the United States, in consultation with the Vietnamese and other friendly interested powers, work out a mutually acceptable solution to provide for continuing supervision of the 17th parallel and the cease-fire. He suggested that such a solution could be reached outside the framework of the Geneva agreements and implemented by an international body other than the ICC.²

¹To Saigon, tel. 1901 (2154 to Paris, 3097 to London), Dec. 2, 1955, secret.

²From Saigon, tel. 2441, Dec. 10, 1955, secret.

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At this point, the Geneva Co-Chairmen entered the picture. They had met in Geneva on November 14 to consider communications from the Governments of North and South Vietnam, Communist China, and India, and the Fourth Interim Report of the Control Commission. On December 20, the Co-Chairmen addressed letters to all of the other participants in the 1954 Geneva Conference and to the States members of the ICC in which they noted with concern that the implementation of certain provisions of the Geneva agreements was unsatisfactory. They emphasized that they regarded the work of the ICC in Vietnam as "an important contribution to the preservation of peace in South-East Asia", and they deplored any obstruction of the Commission's activities. The Co-Chairmen solicited the suggestions of the addressees regarding ways to improve the carrying-out of what had been agreed upon at Geneva.¹

On January 26, 1956, the Chinese Communists replied to the Co-Chairmen's letter and proposed reconvening the Geneva Conference (expanded to accommodate representatives of the three States serving as members of the International Control Commission) for the ostensible purpose of getting consultations under way between Saigon and Hanoi to arrange for the reunification of Vietnam through nationwide elections.² The Chinese response led to a considerable amount of diplomatic activity in Washington, London, Ottawa, and Saigon designed to create conditions under which all parties to the Geneva Accords could accept the status quo without having to fall back on the Geneva Conference.

In conversation with British Foreign Secretary Selwyn Lloyd in Washington on January 31, Secretary Dulles interpreted the Chinese Communists' note to the Geneva Co-Chairmen proposing the reconvening of the Geneva Conference as being meant to cloak a broader purpose than the question of elections in Vietnam. Dulles suspected that Premier Chou En-lai had in mind a high-level conference for the negotiation of a regional Asian pact, the neutralization of Southeast Asia, and such matters. Lloyd agreed with Dulles' appraisal of the Chinese note and suggested that the United States and the United Kingdom await Soviet

¹Documents Relating to British Involvement in the Indo-China Conflict, 1945-1965 (Cmd. 2834), pp. 114-115.

²To Saigon, tel. 2563, Jan. 27, 1956, secret.

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reaction to Peking's proposal as well as that of the other recipients. Dulles expressed himself willing to "stall along on that basis."¹

Following intensive talks with the Canadians in Ottawa, the British submitted to the United States an aide-mémoire, dated February 13, on the subject of a possible approach to Diem to persuade the Vietnamese Government to assume certain undertakings the British (and, presumably, the Canadians) considered necessary if a new Geneva Conference or a crisis in July were to be avoided. Specifically, the British wished Diem to issue a statement which, without mentioning the Geneva Accords, would commit the Vietnamese Government to (a) respect the armistice demarcation line and keep its troops out of the demilitarized zone, (b) refrain from the introduction of additional military personnel and equipment, (c) refuse to join any military alliance (e.g., SEATO) or to permit the establishment of foreign military bases, and (d) replace the French on the Joint Armistice Commission and facilitate ICC supervision of the execution of commitments (a), (b), and (c).

When informed of the British proposal, Ambassador Reinhardt in Saigon reported that, since the Vietnamese themselves had suggested to him the possibility of a Government declaration whereby South Vietnam would assume responsibility for "certain clauses" of the cease-fire, separate American and British approaches along the lines set out in the U.K. aide-mémoire might solve the immediate succession problem, provided that the French, and the Canadians and Indians in the ICC, could be dissuaded from urging the Geneva Co-Chairmen to seek a formal solution acceptable to all interested parties. But, to the astonishment of Washington and London, the Indian Chairman of the International Control Commission, Atvar Singh, disputed both the wisdom of and the need for a South Vietnamese statement. A declaration specifying the clauses of the cease-fire the Saigon Government would willingly implement would probably compel the ICC to seek from the Co-Chairmen a revision of its terms of reference. A step of this kind would give the Viet Minh an excuse to claim that the Cease-Fire was being unilaterally amended and therefore to demand an early reconvening of the Geneva Conference. Singh told Ambassador Reinhardt that he believed no formal action by the

¹To Saigon, tel. 2652, Feb. 3, 1956, secret.

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Co-Chairmen would be necessary--either concerning the succession issue or the continuation of the ICC--and that even failure of the South Vietnamese to replace the French on the Joint Armistice Commission might simply be treated as a violation of the Cease-Fire to be dealt with "by the usual exchange of correspondence".¹

The Government of India communicated its views more formally in a note of February 23 to the Geneva Co-Chairmen. New Delhi pointed out that it was unreasonable and impractical for the states comprising the ICC to continue to serve indefinitely with undefined responsibilities. It was equally apparent, the Indian note observed, that the withdrawal of the Commission without some political settlement might well lead to a conflict inside South Vietnam "and in all probability between the two zones."

It was also clear, the Indian note continued, that general elections for the reunification of Vietnam could not be held by July 1956, even if both parties agreed to enter into negotiations as a result of intervention by the Co-Chairmen. It followed, therefore, that arrangements for the continuance of the armistice and its supervision had to be made. The agreement of the two parties, of the supervisory powers, and of all the Geneva Conference powers had to be obtained to extend the functions of the International Control Commission if peace were to be maintained. This required the urgent attention of the Co-Chairmen, for, after July 1956, the position of the Commission might become untenable.

The letter from the Indian Government noted that South Vietnam had reaffirmed, in its letter of October 7, 1955, to the British Co-Chairman, its adherence to the principle of elections, provided these were absolutely free and conducted under all the guarantees necessary for a really democratic vote.² The Indian Government noted also that the North Vietnamese authorities had requested, in their August 17, 1955, message to the two Co-Chairmen, that they take "all necessary

¹From Saigon, tel. 3357, Feb. 19, and tel. 3375, Feb. 20, 1956, both confidential.

²See The Question of Nationwide Elections in Vietnam, 1954-1960 (Historical Office Research Project No. 833), p. 30.

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measures" to guarantee the implementation of the Geneva Agreements.¹ India considered that in these two declarations and also in the requests of the Communist Chinese and the North Vietnamese for a new conference there was a basis for action. In the Indians' view, it would be reasonable to ask the Chinese and North Vietnamese to await the results of an early meeting of the Co-Chairmen. The Indian Government concluded that, prior to the "final and inevitable step" of calling a large conference, the Co-Chairmen had to take a new initiative to resolve the situation. India therefore suggested a meeting of the Co-Chairmen with the least possible delay.²

Up to this point in the discussions about the succession problem, the United States had been largely a listener and observer. However, when, on February 18, the Soviet Union communicated to London its support of the Chinese Communists' proposal for reconvening the Geneva Conference, the British addressed another aide-mémoire to Washington in an attempt to get the United States off dead center.³ The Department of State finally agreed to commit itself to paper and, on February 29, delivered to the British Embassy an aide-mémoire in which the U.S. Government was described as agreeing in principle that a meeting of the Geneva Conference Co-Chairmen on Vietnam was preferable to reconvening the Conference itself. It was the understanding of the United States that the meeting of the Co-Chairmen would be held off until April and would be conducted as informally as possible. Washington hoped that the British would defer a reply to the Russians until after the Vietnam question had been discussed at the SEATO meeting in Karachi in early March and following Secretary Dulles' talks with Diem in Saigon.

With respect to what might be worked out, the Department believed it inadvisable for the South Vietnamese Government to assume responsibility for only "certain clauses" of the Cease-Fire Agreement, for such limited liability "would in effect

¹See ibid., p. 27.

²To Saigon, tel. 3060, Mar. 8, 1956, confidential.

³Aide-mémoire, British Embassy, Washington, Feb. 25, 1956, confidential.


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amount to a Vietnamese proposal to place the armistice in a new framework outside Geneva." Unless the Communist side raised a fuss over Vietnam, the Department felt it better to continue existing arrangements rather than to take on the delicate and complex task of formulating and seeking agreement on a new modus vivendi. Finally, the Department wished it known that the United States did not believe that a new conference on Vietnam would help towards a practical or desirable political settlement in the near future.¹

On his way to the SEATO meeting in Karachi, British Foreign Secretary Lloyd stopped off in New Delhi and learned from Prime Minister Nehru that the Indian Government was disposed to preserve the International Control Commission, provided the Vietnamese Government cooperated with it and took over de facto the functions of the French High Command, "no matter how informally". Nehru's assurances helped clear the way for the British to reply to Moscow's note of February 18, and Secretary Dulles concurred with the draft Lloyd showed him in Karachi.²

Accordingly, by a note dated March 9, the British informed the Soviet Union of their agreement "that steps should be taken to facilitate the operations of the International Supervisory Commission" in Vietnam. The British expressed doubt, however, that the conference proposed by the Chinese and supported by the Russians "would necessarily provide the quickest or most satisfactory means of reaching agreement." They suggested that it might be "appropriate that the two Co-Chairmen should meet to discuss the situation" after having sought "further clarification of the views of the other countries concerned"--a procedure which "would be in conformity with the views of the Government of India, which holds the chairmanship of the International Commission."³

¹To Saigon, tel. 2961 (4925 to London), Mar. 1, 1956, confidential.

²From Karachi, tel. SECTO 10, Mar. 7, 1956, secret.

³Documents Relating to British Involvement in the Indo-China Conflict, 1945-1965 (London, HMSO, 1965, Cmnd. 2834), p. 120.

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While the British prepared for the meeting of the Co-Chairmen, Secretary Dulles called on Nehru and learned of his concern over Diem's attitude respecting the armistice arrangements. Nehru thought that the South Vietnamese Government, having inherited the French position, should assume the liabilities as well as the advantages of this change, including the armistice obligations. Dulles said that he did not believe the principle of inheritance applied in that way, for Diem had explicitly and repeatedly stated that he did not and would not accept the Armistice Agreement. He felt, however, that Diem would abide by the principal terms.¹

Dulles then proceeded to Saigon, where on March 14 he had a two-hour discussion with Diem about, among other matters, the succession problem. Dulles said that to forestall a Geneva Conference which the United States and the United Kingdom did not want and to assist the British in their coming talks with the Russians it would be helpful if Vietnam would concern itself with finding a formula to give some indications of practical compliance with the armistice. The Secretary also pointed out that Vietnam had a duty to its friends to make known its intentions before the Co-Chairmen met in London. Summarizing the views of Lloyd and Nehru, he urged Diem to give sympathetic consideration to something similar to the declaration suggested by the British.

Diem stated that Vietnam was cooperating and would continue to cooperate with the ICC to keep the peace and that Vietnam had no intention to resort to force, permit the establishment of foreign bases, or enter military alliances. The Secretary cautioned Diem against assuming commitments for an indefinite period, pointing out that Vietnam might wish at some later time to enter SEATO although such a step was not feasible at that time. Diem referred to the ICC as a safeguard for Vietnam and acknowledged the correctness of the view that a declaration by Vietnam would facilitate maintaining the status quo. He did not commit himself further, however.

Loose though Diem's pledge to Dulles was, Chau affirmed to British Ambassador Stephenson in Saigon that a South Vietnamese declaration on the armistice provisions would be made. The

¹From New Delhi, tel. SECTO 40, Mar. 10, 1956, secret.

²From Saigon, tel. 3759, Mar. 15, 1956, secret.

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question of content and timing immediately arose. American and British officials in Saigon agreed that it was important for the United States and the United Kingdom to see the precise language of the proposed Vietnamese declaration to forestall its being so watered down as to be of little use. With respect to timing, the Department of State was of the view that immediate publication of a Vietnamese declaration might cause a barrage of Communist propaganda, perhaps making the declaration ineffective as a bargaining tool for the British by the time of their mid-April meeting with the Russians. If the declaration were made public after the meeting of the Co-Chairmen, it might appear to be the result of pressure by the Geneva Powers and therefore harm Diem domestically. To the Department, therefore, it seemed best for the Vietnamese to issue the declaration just before the meeting of the Co-Chairmen.

The Department also felt it would be useful to keep the declaration "in diplomatic channels" for possible amendment, but that there was no reason why the British should not keep the Governments of India and Canada informed of the progress of negotiations, "revealing by stages additions to [the] draft" which the Vietnamese were "willing to buy." Regarding the declaration's substance, the Department felt that the Embassy at Saigon might attempt to persuade the Vietnamese Government that any reference in the declaration to reunification be phrased in terms of "under free conditions" rather than "by free elections". The Department also cautioned the Embassy that the British would probably want a fairly specific Vietnamese commitment against joining alliances.¹

The succession question became more critical when, on March 19, Ambassador Hoppenot informed the International Control Commission of France's decision to close out the High Command effective April 15. In some alarm, the Government of India addressed a note to the Geneva Conference Co-Chairmen, on March 23, in which it pointed out that "neither the French authorities nor the Viet-Nam authorities have made any proposals as to the manner in which the [International Control] Commission could continue to supervise the Cease-fire Agreement after the withdrawal of the French High Command." The note continued:

¹From Saigon, tel. 3813, Mar. 19; to Saigon, tel. 3187, Mar. 20, 1956; both secret.

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"Although the South Viet-Nameese authorities have promised to give practical co-operation and to take over responsibility for the security of the Commission from the 1st April onwards, they are not prepared to assume the legal obligations of the French High Command, as successors of the French Power in South Viet-Nam. In the circumstances, the Commission views with serious concern the prospect of having to supervise an agreement which will cease to have any legal basis since one party to the agreement--the French High Command--will have disappeared. It is clear that the Commission will not be able to hold the South Viet-Nam accountable, unless it accepts the full residuary obligations undertaken by the French High Command."

The Indian Government requested the Co-Chairmen to "consider the situation as early as possible and, in any case, before the 15th of April, 1956, with a view to resolve the legal lacuna and to enable the Commission to discharge the functions entrusted to it by the Geneva Conference on Indo-China."¹

In immediate response to the Indian note, the British Foreign Office instructed its Ambassador in Paris to attempt to persuade the French Government to postpone until June the dissolution of the High Command in Vietnam in order that the Geneva Co-Chairmen might have adequate time in which to work out a solution to the problem of the succession. Even though the French had made known a two-week delay (i.e., until April 28) in closing out the High Command, the British considered it impossible to meet with the Russians on the issue of the succession prior to the Bulganin-Khrushchev visit, scheduled for April 18. While sympathetic to the French desire to withdraw their troops and shed the burden of responsibility in Vietnam, the Foreign Office suggested that the Ambassador point out that, with a satisfactory declaration by the South Vietnamese Government, the French might continue to serve as intermediary with the ICC through the commander of the French auxiliary forces which were to remain in Vietnam until June.²

¹From Saigon, tel. 3813, Mar. 19; to Saigon, tel. 3187, Mar. 20, 1956; both secret.

²To Saigon, tel. 3231, Mar. 24, 1956, secret; aide-mémoire, British Embassy, Washington, Mar. 24, 1956.

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In addition to appealing to the French, the British Foreign Office instructed Ambassador Stephenson in Saigon, as the latter informed the American Chargé, Daniel V. Anderson, on the 25th, that it was imperative that the Vietnamese Government make a declaration of intentions respecting the succession in view of the French decision on dissolution of the High Command, the Indian Government's note to the Co-Chairmen, and, most important, the danger that the Franco-Vietnamese political talks, "still pending, may complicate rather than solve [the] succession issue." As Anderson continued in his cabled report to the Department on his talk with Stephenson:

"It will be recalled that French already know general terms of earlier four-point British draft declaration ... and that British believe, and we concur, that attempt to clear declaration with French prior its issuance may result in Franco-Vietnamese wrangling and possibly no declaration at all."

Anderson reported that he agreed that the Vietnamese declaration should be made promptly in order to forestall the possibility of unilateral French action--i.e., refusal to agree to the British request for postponement of the dissolution of the High Command.¹

At the time that the Indian Government had sent its note to the Geneva Conference Co-Chairmen, it had made it known that the proposed declaration on the succession would be acceptable if it specifically committed the South Vietnamese Government to the principles of (1) supervision of the Demilitarized Zone, (2) supervision of the cease-fire provisions regulating the entry of military personnel and material at ports, airfields, and **frontiers**, (3) prohibition of the establishment of military bases and alliances, and (4) reunification through free elections. Such a declaration, if acceptable to the Co-Chairmen, would be sufficient to continue the work of the International Control Commission. If the Co-Chairmen accepted the declaration, the Soviet Foreign Minister should "sell" it to North Viet-Nam as the most that could be got out of the Southern regime. The regime in the North should then make a similar unilateral

¹From Saigon, tel. 3894, Mar. 25, 1956, secret.

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declaration, after which the Co-Chairmen would "take note" of both declarations in a formal communication to the Geneva Conference and Supervisory Powers.¹

On March 26, George Parthasarathi, the new Indian Chairman of the International Control Commission, gave Anderson in Saigon some additional views of the Indian Government on the proposed South Vietnamese declaration. He expressed understanding of South Vietnam's reluctance to agree to become successor to a "colonialist power for responsibilities incurred against Vietnam's wishes." However, having asked the French Expeditionary Corps to withdraw, Vietnam had no choice, as a sovereign nation, but to assume responsibility for the cease-fire. If the Saigon regime failed to do so, the International Control Commission would have no legal basis for continuing to operate in Vietnam.

The Vietnamese should avoid making any reservations in their declaration, Parthasarathi cautioned, for the Co-Chairmen would need leeway in which to work out a modus vivendi during the mid-April discussions. Amendments to the South Vietnamese undertaking could always be suggested once the succession crisis had passed.

To increase the chances of Viet Minh acceptance of the modus vivendi, Parthasarathi continued, the South Vietnamese declaration should attempt to keep alive Viet Minh expectations concerning elections by expressing South Vietnam's regret that genuinely free elections were not possible at that time but indicating that the question might be reviewed in a year or two. Parthasarathi added that the ICC would be willing to abolish the liaison missions, which were not required by the cease-fire agreement. As a result, the Viet Minh liaison mission, always opposed by South Vietnam, could be dissolved. In return, the ICC would request South Vietnamese agreement to moving its headquarters to Saigon.

Parthasarathi concluded by saying that the ICC could not assume responsibility from the French for the Joint Armistice Commission, for the ICC's functions were only supervisory; it could not police the Demilitarized Zone and issue passes to cross

To Saigon, tel. 3230, Mar. 24, 1956, secret.

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the line. Parthasarathi therefore thought the best solution would be to avoid raising the JAC question for at least several months.¹

Evidence of continued foot-dragging by the Saigon Government with respect to its promised declaration on the succession was produced by Sir James Plimsoll, the Australian Undersecretary for Southeast Asia, when he reported to Anderson a conversation he had had on March 24 with President Diem, Secretary to the Presidency Chau, and Foreign Minister Mau. Diem had requested the Australian Government to intervene with the French to obtain logistic support for the ICC and to ask them "to be more reasonable." He had declared that the Vietnamese Government was prepared to cooperate with the ICC, avoid the use of force, respect the demarcation line, and prevent the establishment of foreign military bases in free Vietnam. He had made no mention, however, of elections or military alliances.

Chau had intervened to say that the Indian position that South Vietnam should express willingness to assume the "obligations" of the cease-fire was unacceptable. Mau informed Plimsoll that the Vietnamese declaration might be forthcoming in about ten days but that the sense of urgency had diminished in light of the French decision not to dissolve the High Command until April 28. Plimsoll told Anderson, however, that the Australian Government believed the Vietnamese declaration should be made ready "soonest" in order to have the maximum propaganda impact and to appear to be the result of pressure following the Indian note to the Co-Chairmen.²

A new note of urgency was sounded when the British Foreign Office on March 27 instructed Stephenson in Saigon to press for the Vietnamese declaration as a means of strengthening Britain's hand in the forthcoming negotiations with the Russians, to encourage the French to defer dissolution of the High Command beyond April 28, and to persuade the International Control Commission to remain in Vietnam. Stressing the fact that their own four-point proposal represented the minimum acceptable to all parties, the British stated their preference for a public

¹From Saigon, tel. 3917, Mar. 26, 1956, secret.

²From Saigon, tel. 3900, Mar. 26, 1956, confidential.

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declaration by Vietnam which could then publicly be endorsed by the Western Powers and, hopefully, by India before the two Co-Chairmen met on April 18. If the Vietnamese preferred to furnish private assurances, the Foreign Office was prepared to accept these in the form of a reply to the Co-Chairmen's note of December 21, provided it contained the full text of the declaration and was prepared in time to be circulated in confidence among the Geneva Conference Powers prior to the Co-Chairmen's meeting.¹

The Department of State assented to having Anderson support in both British and Vietnamese circles in Saigon the principle of a declaration by Vietnam. It suggested, however, that, while the United States could help promote the British draft of the declaration, Anderson might "leave sufficient leeway to allow for possible later U.S. support of some or all points of a probable Vietnamese counterdraft."²

For lack of cooperation on the part of the Vietnamese, the British continued to receive negative replies from the French respecting continuation of the High Command in Vietnam beyond the April 28 date for its dissolution. In their negotiations with the Saigon Government, the French had failed to detect any conciliatory gestures on the part of the Vietnamese in such form as a request for retention of French training units or the offer of facilities to supply French forces in Laos or the French naval units in the Far East. The failure of the Vietnamese to make any concrete offers or requests arose from the fact that the Saigon Government was sharply divided on the issue: the Secretary to the Presidency favored asking the French to leave certain military personnel in Vietnam; the Foreign Minister took the position that the "French must do the asking."³

Ambassador Stephenson's representations in Saigon finally paid off. On March 31, the day on which Ambassador Reinhardt returned to the Vietnamese capital following a Tokyo meeting

¹From Saigon, tel. 3923, Mar. 27, 1956, secret.

²To Saigon, tel. 3302, Mar. 30, 1956, secret.

³To Saigon, tel. 3303, Mar. 30, 1956, secret.

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Chapter IV

VALIDATION OF THE STATUS QUO IN VIETNAM AND RESOLUTION
OF THE SUCCESSION PROBLEM, APRIL-SEPTEMBER 1956

Summary

As the date approached on which, according to the Geneva Conference Final Declaration, elections were to be held throughout all of Vietnam with a view to reunification, the Geneva Conference Co-Chairmen canvassed the other Geneva participants to determine their wishes. Most of the respondents agreed that conditions suitable for genuinely free elections in Vietnam did not prevail. The Co-Chairmen therefore tacitly agreed to postpone the elections sine die in return for a South Vietnamese pledge to uphold the substance of the Armistice arrangements. Explicit in this arrangement were the retention and continued functioning of the International Control Commission and South Vietnamese assumption of French responsibilities under the Geneva Accords.

British Efforts To Secure a Firmer South
Vietnamese Commitment Respecting the
Cease-Fire and the ICC

On March 30, 1956, the Soviet Foreign Ministry delivered a note to the British Embassy in Moscow in which, after itemizing the various respects in which the Geneva Accords had not been implemented, the Soviet Government took up and supported the suggestion earlier made by Communist China, North Vietnam, and Poland that a new conference on Indochina be convened to meet the need "of taking urgent measures to avert a possible frustration of the Geneva Agreements in Viet-Nam." The Soviet note continued: "However, taking into account the point of view of the British Government and also the proposal of the Indian Government, as expressed in their letter of 21 February,¹ the Soviet Government do not object to the preliminary discussion by the Chairmen of the Geneva Conference on Indo-China of the question of possible measures to guarantee the implementation of the Geneva Agreements in Viet-Nam, including the question of summoning a

¹See ante, p. 136.

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new conference, bearing in mind that this will help them more quickly to reach agreement concerning the summoning of the above-mentioned conference." The Soviet note went on to propose that the Co-Chairmen meet in London "within the next few days". For the purpose of the meeting, the Soviet Government authorized Andrei A. Gromyko, First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, to be its spokesman.¹

Finally armed with the Vietnamese declaration on the problem of the succession, the British Government replied to the Soviets on April 5. It agreed to the proposed earlier meeting of the Co-Chairmen, suggesting April 11 as the date, and stated that the Marquess of Reading, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, would represent the Foreign Secretary in the talks.²

The British had some misgivings, however, about the validity of the Vietnamese declaration as an instrument to persuade the Indians and Canadians to continue to serve on the International Control Commission and to dissuade the Russians from demanding a new Geneva Conference. Under instruction from the Foreign Office, therefore, Ambassador Stephenson called on President Diem, on April 6, to suggest that the Saigon Government might be willing to issue a statement reading: "The Government of Vietnam, although not considering itself bound by or under any compulsion because of the agreement on cessation of hostilities in Vietnam, nevertheless intends in effect to fulfill the residual conditions of the existing armistice which it is the duty of the International Control Commission to supervise." Stephenson indicated that such a statement need not be made public but that it might be shown in confidence to the Canadian and Indian Governments and, if necessary, to the Soviets.

Diem agreed to consider the British proposal. He pointed out, however, that one of the principal objections to Vietnam's assuming responsibilities from the French under the Geneva Accords was membership in the Joint Armistice Commission, a body on which Vietnam had no intention of being represented.³

¹Documents Relating to British Involvement in the Indo-China Conflict, 1945-1965 (Cmd. 2834; London, HMSO, 1965), pp. 121-123.

²Ibid., p. 123.

³From Saigon, tel. 4059, Apr. 6, 1956, secret.

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Stephenson explained that the French, while unwilling to postpone dissolution of the High Command, had offered to act as intermediaries between the Government of Vietnam and the International Control Commission and to continue to serve on the Joint Commission.¹ The Saigon Government gave evidence of reluctance to have the French represent it on the Joint Commission, and Ambassador Reinhardt reported his doubt that the French offer would "weigh heavily in the balance."²

Indeed, the United States itself was reluctant to back up the British proposal to the Diem Government. As the Department of State informed Embassy Saigon on April 6, the implication in the British draft statement that Diem was tied down to the "Geneva structure probably entirely unpalatable to Diem and counter-productive our own interests."³ Reinhardt reported his agreement that the United States "should not hasten to support British démarche, particularly since underlying purpose, which is to obtain Canadian and Indian acceptance of Government of Vietnam's declaration as sufficient basis for continued existence International Control Commission, may possibly be achieved without additional assurances being sought from Diem"⁴

Even before the original Vietnamese declaration had been drafted and delivered to Stephenson in Saigon on April 3, Prime Minister Nehru, in a foreign affairs address before the Indian Parliament on March 29, had alluded to the difficulties of the succession in Vietnam, declaring that, if the International Control Commission were terminated, only trouble could result. He stated that India did not wish to leave the Commission and that there were hopeful signs that South Vietnam might accept the obligations flowing from the Geneva Accords "and thus make it easier for us to function."⁵

¹To Saigon, tel. 3377, Apr. 6, 1956, secret.

²From Saigon, tel. 4080, Apr. 7, 1956, secret.

³To Saigon, tel. 3377, Apr. 6, 1956, secret.

⁴From Saigon, tel. 4080, Apr. 7, 1956, secret.

⁵From New Delhi, tel. 2153, Apr. 2, 1956, official use only.

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²Ibid., p. 123.

³From Saigon, tel. 4059, Apr. 6, 1956, secret.

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¹To Saigon, tel. 3377, Apr. 6, 1956, secret.

²From Saigon, tel. 4080, Apr. 7, 1956, secret.

³To Saigon, tel. 3377, Apr. 6, 1956, secret.

⁴From Saigon, tel. 4080, Apr. 7, 1956, secret.

⁵From New Delhi, tel. 2153, Apr. 2, 1956, official use only.

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The Director of the Indian Department of Foreign Affairs, M. J. Desai, informed Ambassador Cooper on April 9 that the Indian Government had not yet reached a decision on the acceptability of the South Vietnamese declaration. Desai expressed his own view that the declaration represented a statement of good will without, however, any definite commitments to the International Control Commission. He made known his concern that requests by the ICC for South Vietnam to act or desist from action would depend upon assurances by the United Kingdom rather than on obligations assumed by the Government of Vietnam. Desai suggested that the Saigon Government might acknowledge its responsibilities as successor to the French or specify to the ICC the obligations it was prepared to accept in the areas outlined in the declaration. In the latter event, the reference to elections should mention a time-limit--one of perhaps twelve months--at the end of which the question would be reviewed.¹

On the same day that Cooper and Desai discussed the matters described above, India's roving Ambassador, V. K. Krishna Menon, brought up the question of the Vietnamese declaration with Foreign Secretary Lloyd in London. Menon told Lloyd that the declaration did not go far enough. He gave it as his opinion that the North Vietnamese would agree only to a firm South Vietnamese commitment to assume the obligations of the Geneva Accords and that they would accept a postponement of nationwide elections only if the South Vietnamese proved willing to set a new date for holding them. He suggested the convening of a "miniature Geneva Conference" to be attended by representatives of North and South Vietnam, the two Geneva Co-Chairmen, and the three members of the International Control Commission. When Menon made the further, surprising suggestion that he be permitted to sit in on the first meeting of the Co-Chairmen in London on April 11, his proposal was firmly rejected by both Reading and Gromyko. Menon was then reported to have left the Foreign Office "in somewhat of a huff".²

Menon then took his case to the French on April 12. In the light of Nehru's remarks before the Indian Parliament at the end of the preceding month, the French Foreign Office put little

¹From New Delhi, tel. 2211, Apr. 9, 1956, secret.

²To Saigon, tel. 3432, Apr. 12, 1956, secret; from London, tel. 4599, Apr. 12, 1956, secret.

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stock in Menon's claims respecting the inadequacy of the South Vietnamese declaration. It did agree with Menon, however, that it would be useful if Diem could be persuaded to accept the principle of a review by the Geneva Conference Co-Chairmen of the question of nationwide elections in 1957, in view of the fact that the Saigon Government would not be bound to follow the recommendations of the Co-Chairmen even if the latter should call for elections.¹

Under instruction from the Foreign Office, the British Ambassadors in Washington, Ottawa, Paris, and New Delhi attempted, on April 7, to gain support for the British proposal that the Diem Government elaborate on its April 3 declaration. The British Government wished also to be able to tell Gromyko that the four countries approached considered the proposed revised Vietnamese declaration an adequate basis for maintaining the cease-fire and continuing the International Control Commission.

The Department of State informed the British on April 10 that the United States could not support them in their new demands on Saigon. Department officers informally handed to British Embassy representatives a confidential statement which read as follows:

"The United States Government regards the Vietnamese declaration [of April 3] as a great step forward in terms of thoughtful statesmanship and as evidence of the Vietnamese Government's desire to cooperate with the free world in maintaining peace. The United States Government considers that the Vietnamese Government's expression of willingness to continue effective cooperation with the ICC, to assure the security of the Commission members, and to facilitate in all possible measure the accomplishment of the Commission's mission of peace should enable the ICC to continue its task of supervising the armistice in Viet-Nam"²

The Canadian Ministry of External Affairs communicated its views on the original Vietnamese declaration to the American Embassy in Ottawa on April 10. The Canadians found the declaration

¹From Paris, tel. 4775, Apr. 13, 1956, secret.

²To Saigon, tel. 3402, Apr. 10, 1956, confidential.

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unsatisfactory, for it did not accept either de jure or de facto responsibilities under the Armistice Agreement. Thus, when the French High Command became dissolved, the Canadians argued, there would no longer be a responsible party in the south. Furthermore, they did not believe that the Indians, Russians, or Viet Minh would accept the declaration. The Canadians were therefore supporting the British attempt to obtain a confidential supplementary statement from the South Vietnamese Government.¹

As reported to the Department of State by Ambassador Dillon on April 13, French Foreign Office spokesmen considered the Vietnamese declaration of April 3 as "not bad" and expressed pleasant surprise that the Vietnamese had been willing to go so far. They doubted that much more could be extracted from Diem and believed the declaration should be useful to the British in their current talks with the Russians. However, the French indicated they thought publication of the declaration by the Vietnamese on April 6 had been a tactical mistake. The declaration might have been produced during the British-Soviet talks as a "great achievement and the best that could be obtained." In spite of this, the French felt that something could be worked out in London, using the declaration as a basis.


In a note handed to British Ambassador Stephenson on April 10, the South Vietnamese Government clarified the meaning of some of the phraseology employed in its April 3 declaration. British attention was invited in particular to the phrases "will uphold existing conditions of the present state of peace" and "will to the fullest extent possible facilitate the accomplishment of its mission of peace." By these phrases, the Government of Vietnam stated, it meant to cooperate with the ICC in coping with the following remaining problems: (1) supervision of the demarcation line; (2) supervision of ports and airfields, as well as all frontiers of Vietnam, to prevent the introduction of armed forces, military personnel, war material, and munitions; (3) liberation of prisoners of war; (4) complaints about reprisals, sabotage, and property destruction; and (5) deactivation of the Joint Armistice Commission with the dissolution of the French High Command.²

¹To Saigon, tel. 3411, Apr. 11, 1956, secret.

²From Saigon, tel. 4105, Apr. 11, 1956, secret.

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Agreement by All Interested Parties to the Continued
Functioning of the ICC Under Its 1954 Mandate

While the British Government, as Co-Chairman of the Geneva Conference, sought a firmer South Vietnamese commitment respecting the upholding of the Geneva Accords on the eve of meeting with its Russian counterpart, the matter of the future functioning of the International Control Commission under its existing mandate--a question with which the Geneva Co-Chairmen would inevitably be seized--was raised by the North Vietnamese. When informed by the International Control Commission of France's formal notification of intent to dissolve the French High Command in Indochina on April 28, the authorities in Hanoi took this occasion to present their views on the South Vietnamese declaration of April 3. In a lengthy letter to the ICC dated April 10, General Vo Nguyen Giap, the North Vietnamese Minister of National Defense, described the South Vietnamese declaration as "unsatisfactory". Both France and the Government of South Vietnam, Giap contended, were co-responsible for implementing the cease-fire and the Geneva Conference Declaration in toto. With the pending withdrawal of the French and the refusal of the Saigon Government to accept the Geneva Accords, he continued, a situation was developing in which the ICC would be unable to continue to function according to its mandate.¹ Giap therefore urged the convening of a new Geneva Conference.

With similar concern, but from a somewhat different point of view, at the time that it explained its support of British efforts to secure an additional statement from the South Vietnamese Government on the future of the armistice arrangements, the Canadian Ministry of External Affairs set forth its views to American Embassy officials on the future of the ICC in Vietnam. The Ministry foresaw a lengthy period of consultation between the British and the Soviets and, possibly among the other Geneva Conference powers on the entire Cease-Fire machinery. During this period of negotiation, the Canadians stated, the International Control Commission could be expected to carry on its work on an ad hoc basis--an arrangement agreeable to the Canadian Government, provided the Indian and Polish Governments also agreed.

¹From Saigon, tel. 4138, Apr. 13, 1956, secret. In reporting the content of the Giap letter, Ambassador Reinhardt in Saigon recommended that the ICC "take a stand" on Giap's position and request the Geneva Conference Co-Chairmen to act promptly.


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The Ministry also said that, during the period of ad hoc operation of the ICC, the Saigon Government should cooperate and permit completion of some of the "stalled investigations" of cease-fire violations in order to convince the Indians that it would be possible to make the armistice work despite the obduracy of South Vietnam on the question of legal responsibilities. In the Canadians' view, the Vietnamese should never refuse to take action requested by the ICC merely on the grounds that South Vietnam was not a party to the cease-fire agreement and therefore not bound by its terms.¹

When the Reading-Gromyko talks got under way on April 11, the Co-Chairmen had before them two papers for consideration. One was the South Vietnamese note of April 3 to the United Kingdom which, Reading told Gromyko, the British Government considered as constituting acceptance of the substance of the principal continuing provisions of the Cease-Fire agreement in Vietnam. The British thus believed that the South Vietnamese note provided an adequate basis for maintaining the cease-fire after the dissolution of the French High Command on April 28 and for continued supervision by the ICC.²

The second item on which the Co-Chairmen had to act was a communication from the International Control Commission, transmitted to the British Foreign Office by the Indian High Commission in London on April 9, which included the text of a letter of April 3 to the ICC from the French High Commissioner in Vietnam. The French confirmed that, pursuant to a request by the Government of South Vietnam on January 19, the French High Command would cease to function as of April 28. The French offered, however, to continue logistic support of the ICC up to June 30. On the basis of the information received from the French, the ICC requested of the Geneva Co-Chairmen "the necessary direction to the Commission".³

¹To Saigon, tel. 3411, Apr. 11, 1956, secret.

²"Proposal by Her Majesty's Government sent to Mr. Gromyko on April 13", confidential, delivered to the Department of State by representatives of the British Embassy, Washington, April 13, 1956.

³Note No. 262, British Embassy, Washington, April 19, 1956, confidential.

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On April 19, the Co-Chairmen addressed a message to the Chairman of the International Control Commission (as well as to all members of the Geneva Conference and the remaining supervisory powers) stating that the Co-Chairmen were "considering the situation which has arisen in Vietnam in relation to the Geneva Agreements". In reply to the Commission's request for directions, the Co-Chairmen's message continued, "they wish strongly to express the view that the fact that the Co-Chairmen are now considering the situation should not affect the work of the International Supervisory Commission in Vietnam, which should remain in being and continue its normal activities."¹

The Co-Chairmen's letter brought differing reactions from the various interested parties. On April 25, the Canadian Embassy reported to the Department of State the views of its Government and those of Poland; Embassy Saigon reported the reactions of India, France, and South Vietnam. The Canadian Government proposed that the International Control Commission should proceed on the assumption, following French withdrawal from Vietnam on April 28, that the whole fabric of the armistice agreement in Vietnam remained in force and act as if the Government of Vietnam had in fact agreed to take over French responsibilities. Ottawa also suggested that the Canadian member of the ICC should do what he could to prevent the Commission from becoming pre-occupied with the anomalies of the situation and from trying to solve too many anticipated troubles in advance. In the Canadians' view, the Commission should consider its job as the strictly practical one of assisting the parties to maintain the armistice.

As reported by the Canadians, the Polish Government had suggested a conference among representatives of North and South Vietnam, the three ICC Powers, the United Kingdom, and the U.S.S.R. in order to find an "acceptable solution" to the problem of supervising the armistice following French withdrawal--a "miniature" Geneva Conference of the kind earlier proposed by Krishna Menon. The Polish member of the ICC had given the Canadian member the impression, however, that his Government would agree to continue to serve on the Commission after April 28 and accept an ad hoc working arrangement if no better alternative presented itself.²

¹Ibid.

²To Saigon, tel. 3583, Apr. 25, 1956, secret.

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As expressed by its representative on the ICC, the Indian Government viewed the Geneva Conference Co-Chairmen's letter of April 19 as of little help to the Control Commission, for the ICC could not continue its normal activities after April 28, as requested by the Co-Chairmen, unless there was a second legal party to the cease-fire, which party should be South Vietnam. Parthasarathi contended that the Commission could not correspond with the Saigon Government regarding implementation of specific articles of the Geneva Accords as long as South Vietnam insisted that it was not bound by them--a position Foreign Minister Mau had repeated on April 19.

Aware of the Indian viewpoint, the French in Saigon expressed willingness to continue the liaison duties with both the ICC and the Joint Armistice Commission after April 28 and even beyond June 30 for an indefinite period if the South Vietnamese Government and the Viet Minh were agreeable and if the Co-Chairmen made the request to the French. The French would then operate vis-à-vis the ICC and the JAC on the basis of the Geneva Agreements and with the Government of Vietnam on the basis of Vietnamese commitments to be made to the French similar to those contained in Saigon's declaration of April 3 to the British.

In return for continuing their liaison duties, the French expected a cooperative attitude on the part of the South Vietnamese Government in providing the French with military facilities in Vietnam. French officials in Saigon frankly stated to Ambassador Reinhardt that they would not and could not politically refuse a request by the Co-Chairmen for some continued French assistance after April 28, but that French willingness to assist would be conditioned by South Vietnam's reaction to the French request for facilities: "If the Vietnamese treat us as enemies rather than allies, we will naturally be less enthusiastic about helping them with the Geneva agreements."

Reinhardt reported that recent conversations with Vietnamese officials revealed that the Government of Vietnam preferred the dissolution of the Joint Armistice Commission but might possibly agree to the French continuing liaison with the Viet Minh temporarily if the Co-Chairmen or the ICC deemed it necessary. The Saigon Government definitely preferred, however, to take over from the French the liaison responsibilities with the ICC as soon as possible.¹

¹From Saigon, tel. 4282, Apr. 25, 1956, confidential.

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In light of the reactions of the various interested parties (France and Vietnam, in particular) to the Co-Chairmen's request that the ICC continue to function beyond April 28, the American and British Ambassadors in Saigon conferred on April 25. They agreed that Stephenson would approach Vietnamese Foreign Minister Mau to determine whether the Saigon Government wished the Co-Chairmen to ask the French to continue their liaison functions with the ICC for a brief period beyond April 28 (a service which was not to be construed as a continuation of the French High Command) and their liaison with the Joint Armistice Commission for an indefinite period until some other arrangement could be worked out. Reinhardt and Stephenson considered the Indian arguments against having the ICC deal directly with the Vietnamese Government, but they believed that these arguments both could and should be subordinated to the apparent wish of Vietnam to conduct its own liaison with the ICC. The two Ambassadors agreed that consent by all parties to having France continue the Joint Armistice Commission would be desirable, for the Commission could then undertake to effect amendments which the Vietnamese wished to have made in certain of the Armistice protocols--in particular, those on the Demilitarized Zone, arms imports, and the Viet Minh liaison mission.¹

Ambassador Stephenson then coordinated his approach to the Vietnamese with the Canadian and Indian members of the ICC, and, on April 27, D. M. Johnson of Canada had the first interview with Foreign Minister Mau. Johnson pointed out to Mau the procedural problems the ICC would face after the French withdrawal on April 28. He stressed the need for the Vietnamese to have the Indians on their side, and he therefore recommended that the Saigon Government avoid making statements to the full Commission rejecting outright the Armistice protocols, for to do so would place the Indian Chairman in a difficult position. Mau replied that his Government considered the protocols in the same light as the provisions of the cease-fire--Vietnam had not signed them and was therefore not bound by them, but nevertheless considered them as a part of the "existing conditions" which the Vietnamese Government had accepted in the April 3 declaration. Mau stated further that his Government would like to establish direct liaison with the ICC as soon as possible and to see the JAC dissolved. Pending

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dissolution, Vietnam would agree, if both Co-Chairmen so requested, to have the French participate in the JAC temporarily until some other solution was found.

Reinhardt and Stephenson then called on Mau, prior to the latter's interview with Parthasarathi, and recommended that, in his discussion with the Chairman of the ICC, Mau not be drawn into a detailed discussion of Vietnam's intended implementation of its April 3 declaration. Both Ambassadors pointed out that the Polish member of the ICC was obviously interested in getting the Foreign Minister to make statements which could be used against the Vietnamese Government. Accordingly, both urged Mau not to fall into a trap and that, in his talks with Commission Chairman Parthasarathi, he stick to the general position and refrain from interpreting in detail the term "existing conditions".

Reinhardt reported to the Department that his and Stephenson's advice apparently "bore some fruit." According to the ICC Chairman of the Saigon Office, Avtar Singh, Parthasarathi's talk with Mau went smoothly. The Vietnamese Foreign Minister had proved to be a "paragon of reasonableness". Parthasarathi had felt, however, that Mau's assurances needed to be expressed to the Co-Chairmen rather than to the ICC.¹

As the date set by the French for dissolution of the High Command in Vietnam came and passed, the International Control Commission became fully occupied with a debate on the question of its own survival. By April 30, as reported by Reinhardt from Saigon, the Commission had yet to reach agreement on the text of a reply to the Geneva Conference Co-Chairmen's letter of April 19 requesting it to continue its normal activities until a solution to the French withdrawal had been found.

On April 30, the Co-Chairmen sent a second letter to the ICC stating that, not having been informed to the contrary, they assumed that the ICC would continue to operate. The ICC reached the tentative conclusion that it would have to inform the Co-Chairmen that the Commission could not continue without specific operating instructions from the Co-Chairmen² and subsequently so told them in a letter of May 2.

¹From Saigon, tel. 4323, Apr. 28, 1956, confidential.

²From Saigon, tel. 4344, Apr. 30, 1956, confidential.

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The result of these various exchanges of views was that the talks between the Geneva Conference Co-Chairmen, represented by the Marquess of Reading and Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister Gromyko, which had opened in London on April 11, terminated on May 8 with the issuance of a series of letters. Two identic communications were addressed to the authorities in Saigon and Hanoi expressing concern about "the present situation in relation to the fulfilment of the Geneva Agreements in Vietnam, where the implementation of the political provisions of the Geneva Agreements has not yet begun." The communications pointed out that no consultations concerning the holding of elections had yet taken place and that this constituted a threat to the fulfilment of an important provision of the Agreements. The Co-Chairmen urged both sides to prevent any future violation of the military provisions of the Agreements and to insure the implementation of the political provisions embodied in the Final Declaration. To this end, both parties were invited to transmit to the Co-Chairmen "as soon as possible, either jointly or separately, their views about the time required for the opening of consultations on the organization of nation-wide elections in Vietnam and the time required for the holding of elections as a means of achieving the unification of Vietnam."¹

A third letter, addressed to the Government of France, noted the French announcement of the dissolution of the High Command on April 28. The Co-Chairmen stated that this action had created problems for the ICC, but they expressed confidence that both parts of Vietnam would cooperate. They invited the French to discuss these problems with the Government of South Vietnam in order to reach agreement on an arrangement which would facilitate the tasks of the ICC and the Joint Armistice Commission. The Co-Chairmen asked that, until such arrangements had been agreed upon, the French Government preserve the status quo.²

¹Vietnam and the Geneva Agreements: Documents Concerning the Discussions Between Representatives of Her Majesty's Government and the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics Held in London in April and May 1956, March 30-May 8, 1956 (Cmd. 9763), pp. 10-11.

²Ibid., p. 12.

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The Co-Chairmen also sent a letter to the International Control Commission, acknowledging receipt of its communication of May 2, and expressing the "hope that the International Supervisory Commission will persevere in their efforts to maintain and strengthen peace in Vietnam on the basis of the fulfilment of the Geneva Agreements on Vietnam with a view to the reunification of the country through the holding of free nation-wide elections in Vietnam under the supervision of an international commission." The Co-Chairmen recognized that the dissolution of the French High Command had created difficulties for the ICC. They expressed their confidence, however, that "the authorities in both parts of Vietnam will show effective cooperation and that these difficulties will in practice be removed." They concluded their message by saying that, if the Commission should encounter any problems which could not be solved "on the spot, the Co-Chairmen would be grateful to be informed, so that they may consider whether any further measures are required to facilitate the work of the Commission."¹

Finally, the Co-Chairmen sent messages to the remaining Geneva Conference Powers informing them of the Co-Chairmen's appeal to the ICC.

In what the Department of State recognized as having been "relatively difficult negotiation with the Soviet Union",² the Reading-Gromyko talks had resulted, in the opinion of the British Foreign Office, in "binding over the gap caused by the dissolution of the French High Command." The British admitted, both in Washington and Saigon, that inserting the reference to nation-wide elections in the Co-Chairmen's messages to North and South Vietnam and to the ICC was the price they had had to pay to prevent Russian insistence on convening a new Geneva Conference. As the Department interpreted the situation, the British had not been "sanguine enough about South Vietnam to risk a possible major explosion in bargaining hard with the Soviet Union on the issue."³

¹Ibid., p. 11.

²To Saigon, tel. 3749, May 11, 1956, secret.

³Memorandum by Kattenburg (SEA) of conversation among Youde (British Embassy), Young and Kocher (SEA), May 9, 1956, confidential; from Saigon, tel. 4442, May 9, 1956, secret; to Saigon, tel. 3749, May 11, 1956, secret.


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As reported by the Department to Embassy Saigon on May 11, the United States felt that the United Kingdom and the Soviet Union had emerged from the London talks "as the institutionalized arbiters of the implementation of the Geneva Agreements in Vietnam". The Department put as favorable a construction as it could on the actions of the Co-Chairmen, pointing out that the "immediate danger" of a new conference had been averted, that more time had been gained in which to strengthen South Vietnam, that the armistice was being preserved, and that it was unlikely that nationwide elections would be held in 1956, for the Co-Chairmen had not set a new date for pre-election consultations between North and South Vietnam or for the elections themselves.

At the same time, the Department noted "several unfortunate aspects" in the letters which the Co-Chairmen had sent out. The messages continued to stress the "old Geneva Agreements", by which South Vietnam refused to be bound, and ignored Saigon's declaration of April 3. The Co-Chairmen had given the ICC a much stronger mandate to implement the political provisions of the Final Declaration. The stress on elections would probably prove "highly unpalatable" to the South Vietnamese. Finally, the Saigon Government was unlikely to agree for very long to continuation of French liaison with the ICC and JAC and was equally unlikely to accept French obligations under the Geneva Agreements.¹

Ambassador Reinhardt reported from Saigon his belief that the Indians, while not happy about the results of the London talks, would accept them on the grounds that the Co-Chairmen were "the principals in this affair".² From New Delhi, the American Chargé, Frederic P. Bartlett, reported that M. J. Desai of the Indian Ministry of External Affairs had told him that he regarded the situation in Vietnam following the meetings in London as "fairly satisfactory" for the time being. Desai observed, however, that the maintenance of the armistice would depend upon whether the Vietnamese Government would in practice permit the ICC to carry out its duties in South Vietnam; otherwise the ICC would be unable to do so in North Vietnam because the principle of reciprocity had to be preserved. He stressed that this point was absolutely vital to the continued operation of the ICC.

¹To Saigon, tel. 3749, May 11, 1956, secret.

²From Saigon, tel. 4461, May 11, 1956, secret.

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Desai assumed that Diem would delay answering that portion of the Co-Chairmen's letter concerning the holding of elections as long as possible and that, when he did reply, he would in effect reiterate that the Vietnamese Government favored free elections, but that conditions were not ripe for a fruitful consideration of such elections. Thus the election issue would be postponed for the time being.¹

The French Government made an interim reply on May 14 to the Geneva Conference Co-Chairmen's message of May 8 and professed itself ready, as the Co-Chairmen had requested, to use its good offices and discuss with the Co-Chairmen problems that might arise with the Government of South Vietnam. This offer was made with two reservations, however: (1) the French Government felt it could not accept new responsibilities peculiarly its own, and (2) its good offices would be exercised in the framework of effective cooperation with the Government of South Vietnam; these good offices would stop if such cooperation was absent.²

In its reply of May 22 to the Co-Chairmen, the Saigon Government reaffirmed its desire for peace and pledged itself, although not bound by the Geneva Agreements, to seek practical solutions to the extent that these were compatible with its policy of peace and the "imperatives of its sovereignty". Vietnam repeated its determination to respect the demarcation line and the Demilitarized Zone, pointing out that there could be no menace to peace by a Government which had reduced considerably the size of its army since 1954 and which had caused the withdrawal of the French Expeditionary Corps. The Vietnamese also stated that the ICC deserved effective cooperation, and they envisaged "reinforcing" existing cooperation "still further in the future".

With regard to elections, the Government of Vietnam said it considered that really free general elections constituted a democratic means of attaining reunification but that "the absence of all liberties in North Vietnam renders the problem of electoral and pre-electoral arrangements one to which no practical consideration can be given for the moment."

¹From New Delhi, tel. 2514, May 17, 1956, secret

²Noble Frankland, ed., Documents on International Affairs, 1956 (London, Oxford University Press, 1959), p. 723.

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UNCLASSIFIED

TOP SECRET
164-
DECLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

Ambassador Reinhardt reported that the Vietnamese reply had been drafted by Foreign Minister Mau, assisted by Diem's brother Ngo Dinh Luyen, at that time Vietnamese Ambassador to Great Britain, and reflected efforts of British Ambassador Stephenson and himself to have it as positive as possible. Reinhardt hoped that the reference to "reinforcing" cooperation with the ICC would prove especially helpful in reassuring the Indians.¹

From London, Ambassador Aldrich reported that the reaction to the South Vietnamese answer to the Co-Chairmen's message was one of relief, since the Foreign Office considered the reply could have been much worse. The Foreign Office deplored the degree of firmness with which the Saigon Government repudiated the Geneva Agreements and would have preferred a "vague bow" in the direction of elections rather than a deliberate attack on the Viet Minh's lack of democracy. In general, Aldrich reported, the Foreign Office considered that Diem's best course should be to ignore the legalities of the Geneva Agreements and accept quietly the principles behind them.²

The ICC replied on May 27 to the Co-Chairmen, and stated it would persevere in the efforts to maintain peace in Vietnam, would inform the Co-Chairmen of any obstacles or difficulties encountered, and would continue to deal with the parties on the basis of the status quo "until the arrangements that will facilitate the work of the International Supervisory Commission and of the Joint Commission in Vietnam" had been put into effect.³

The North Vietnamese authorities adopted a hard line in their reply of June 4 to the Co-Chairmen on implementation of the political provisions of the Geneva Conference Final Declaration. They urged the Co-Chairmen to persuade the Saigon Government to enter into the pre-election consultations called for in the Final Declaration. "If the South Vietnam authorities continue to adopt a negative attitude towards consultations and general elections," the North Vietnamese reply concluded, "the Government of the

¹From Saigon, tel. 4599, May 24, 1956, confidential.

²From London, tel. 5674, June 8, 1956, confidential.

³From Saigon, tel. 4763, June 7, 1956, secret; enclosure to British Embassy Note No. 401, Washington, June 20, 1956, confidential.

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Democratic Republic of Vietnam will ask the two Co-Chairmen to convene a new Geneva Conference to discuss the question of the implementation of the Geneva Agreements in Vietnam." The Hanoi authorities agreed, however, that, until the political provisions of the Geneva Accords had been carried out, it was essential that the International Control Commission continue its functions.¹

South Vietnamese De Facto Acceptance of Most French Responsibilities Under the Geneva Accords

In response to the request of the Geneva Co-Chairmen, the French and South Vietnamese Governments addressed themselves once again to the problem of negotiating the de facto assumption by the South Vietnamese of responsibilities carried out by the French under the Geneva Accords. As reported by the American Embassy in Saigon, on the subject of liaison with the ICC the South Vietnamese Government definitely wished to deal directly with the Control Commission. They had told the French that Vietnam would take over French liaison responsibilities within one month from the date of French agreement to pay ICC cash expenses. The takeover would mean that Vietnam would replace French officers in the liaison mission in Saigon and those attached to the fixed and mobile teams in South Vietnam. They would not replace the French attached to teams in North Vietnam nor in the French liaison mission in Hanoi, which would be terminated. With the Vietnamese takeover from the French, all Viet Minh liaison officers in South Vietnam would be required to leave. The French response had been favorable to this view.

With regard to logistic support, the South Vietnamese Government was willing to supply liaison personnel and military staff to supervise logistic support and quarters for the ICC, provided the quarters were Vietnamese-owned. South Vietnam was unwilling, however, to make any cash outlay for food, servants, transportation, or rental of living quarters. The Vietnamese argued that they would appear "successors" if they assumed French financial responsibilities or requested French aid in writing. In reporting these divergent views, Ambassador Reinhardt expressed his belief that the French might eventually agree to pay the costs "if packaged deal re ICC liaison and JAC materializes."

¹Frankland, Op. cit., pp. 726-728.

UNCLASSIFIED

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DECLASSIFIED UNCLASSIFIED
-167-

Concerning the Joint Armistice Commission, South Vietnam was willing to have the French continue serving on this Commission but would not formally request them to do so for fear of the implication that the Vietnamese were legally responsible and the French were merely their representatives. The French, for their part, were willing to continue on the JAC, provided there was no implication that France was a legal party. The French insisted that the South Vietnamese Government request their "good offices" in writing and give assurances that Vietnam would cooperate effectively with the French officer on the JAC. Since the Saigon Government had rejected this proposal, the French were seeking some other formula and were currently trying to persuade ICC Chairman Parthasarathi not to insist on clarification of the legal responsibility, provided a practical solution was found.

Reinhardt stated further that the French did not believe the JAC could be eliminated because the continuation of both the ICC and the JAC was the price the British had paid the Russians in the Reading-Gromyko talks for agreement not to press for July elections. The French also pointed out that the ICC itself insisted that it was responsible only for supervising the implementation of the Geneva Agreements, whereas the JAC was the body responsible for the actual implementation of the cease-fire and could not be eliminated without destroying the armistice. Reinhardt said he believed this was the "line" of the Indian Chairman of the ICC, Parthasarathi, but that the real reasons against eliminating the JAC might well be Viet Minh pressures to retain it and Indian reluctance to terminate the only body which the Indians considered offered the best possibility of establishing contact between the North and the South.

Reinhardt then described the situation regarding patrol of the Demilitarized Zone. He said that the JAC was responsible for patrol, investigation of incidents, and issuance of passes to enter the DMZ or to cross the 17th parallel. However, the French and Viet Minh on the JAC had not been permitted in either half of the DMZ for many months. According to Reinhardt, the JAC had become only a forum for discussing the problems of the Zone; its ability to patrol it was "nil".¹

¹From Saigon, tel. 4830, June 12, 1956, secret.

DECLASSIFIED UNCLASSIFIED

TOP SECRET
-168-
DECLASSIFIED UNCLASSIFIED

In discussions with the French in Saigon in mid-June, British Ambassador Stephenson learned that Paris continued to refuse to pay the costs of maintaining the ICC whenever the Vietnamese Government took over liaison functions with the ICC; the French Government also refused to participate in the JAC unless the South Vietnamese requested such participation in writing. Stephenson had then suggested to London that Secretary Dulles be asked to discuss the situation in his forthcoming talks with French Foreign Minister Pineau and, in support of the British position, point out that the Co-Chairmen's May 8 notes actually met the desire of France to be released from the cease-fire responsibilities. As a great Power, France could afford to accept, without any loss of prestige, the "slightly equivocal" situation which might result from continuing to pay the ICC costs, and participate in the JAC without a written mandate from the Vietnamese. The Government of Vietnam, on the other hand, could not afford to adopt an equivocal position with respect to the Geneva Agreements because of the sensitive internal political situation. Therefore, the British urged the French to adopt a more sympathetic attitude and to reconsider their position in the interests of all parties concerned.¹

In a conversation with the Second Secretary of the American Embassy in Saigon on June 26, the ICC Chairman, George Parthasarathi, expressed the opinion that there would probably be a crisis in the ICC shortly unless the Viet Minh received satisfaction respecting either the cease-fire arrangements (the South Vietnamese taking responsibility from the French, including representation on the Joint Armistice Commission) or a political settlement (setting a date for general elections). He thought that the Viet Minh would not be willing to lose out on both points since they were already resentful at having lost all else they had won at Geneva. Parthasarathi said that, officially, he had to support the Geneva Agreements, but he realized, unofficially, that "elections could not be held now." In the meantime, he warned, some method had to be found to reduce the tension between North and South Vietnam. He thought the only solution seemed to be "neutralization" of Vietnam, guaranteed by the major powers.²

¹From Saigon, tel. 4887, June 16, 1956, secret.

²From Saigon, enclosure to desp. No. 393, June 26, 1956, confidential.

TOP SECRET
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The French had already, on June 20, made known to the British their own counterproposal to Ambassador Stephenson's suggestion. The French proposed to show to the Vietnamese their reply of May 14 to the Co-Chairmen's letter of May 8 (including the reservations contained therein) and request a written acknowledgment from the Vietnamese saying, at least, that they had "no objection" to the French reservations. No mention would be made by either side of the responsibilities each would assume under the terms set forth in the French reply. The French would then inform the Co-Chairmen that, with respect to their own responsibilities under the cease-fire, France would cooperate in the continued functioning of the ICC and would furnish personnel for service on the JAC. They would add that they had discussed these arrangements with the Vietnamese Government, which had posed no objection.

In discussing this approach with the American Chargé in Paris, French Foreign Office officials expressed the hope that it would be acceptable to the South Vietnamese and to the Co-Chairmen, for the French reply appeared to meet the points made in the latter's May 8 letter. They acknowledged that it was uncertain whether the French proposal would satisfy the ICC and the Viet Minh. The Foreign Office gave assurance that France would continue to "advance" funds for maintenance of the ICC without requiring a written request from Vietnam that this be done, hoping to reach agreement later with the Vietnamese on the matter of future financing of the Commission.¹

As reported by Ambassador Reinhardt, any final Franco-Vietnamese understanding would be contingent on solution of the question of financial support of the ICC, and the French wished to resolve this issue through a secret bilateral agreement with the Vietnamese pledging the latter to reimburse France for its cash advances to the ICC. The Vietnamese contended that such an arrangement could be concealed neither from the French nor the Vietnamese National Assemblies; they also continued to object to paying the local costs of the ICC lest they appear to be "successors" to the French. With respect to the JAC, however, the French were prepared to agree to provide personnel from July 1, 1956, onward until such time as the tasks of the JAC were assumed by the ICC.²

¹From Paris, tel. 6080, June 21, 1956, confidential.

²From Saigon, tel. 5020, June 27, 1956, confidential.

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Added impetus for some kind of Franco-Vietnamese agreement on the succession problem came when, on July 11, the British agreed with the Soviet Union, after what Ambassador Aldrich described as "considerable commendable stalling", to the public release on July 15 of the replies to the Co-Chairmen's messages of May 8. The British Foreign Office sent messages to the French and Vietnamese Governments urging them to send an agreed reply on the future of the ICC and the JAC prior to July 15. As the British told Aldrich, the French and Vietnamese replies were not to be published with the other messages to the Co-Chairmen but would place the British in the position of being able to contend that substantial progress was being made in complying with the Co-Chairmen's desires and that the parties could not be blamed for inaction on the elections question in view of the shortness of time.¹

It was not until July 23, however, that the French and Vietnamese finally and officially exchanged notes, dated July 14, on the succession. By this exchange, the French agreed to continue to pay the local costs of the ICC in Vietnam, subject to a later apportionment of the costs. They also agreed that, as long as it was necessary to have the JAC, they would continue to serve on that body, provided the South Vietnamese extended the necessary cooperation. The Vietnamese, for their part, agreed to establish a liaison mission with the ICC, replacing the French, sometime between July 15 and August 15. Because they did not consider themselves a party to the Geneva Agreements, however, they would not undertake to contribute to the local expenses of the ICC. Respecting the JAC, the Vietnamese agreed to extend the same privileges to the French serving on that body as they did to administrative personnel at the French Embassy in Saigon, and they guaranteed their freedom of movement and security in Saigon, Tourane, Dong-Ha, and the Demilitarized Zone.²

In mid-August, the Vietnamese informed Ambassador Reinhardt that, because of administrative and fiscal problems, South Vietnam had postponed until August 31 the assumption of full responsibility for liaison with the ICC. A financial problem had arisen

¹From London, tel. 177, July 11, 1956, secret.

²From Saigon, tel. 287, July 24, 1956, and British Embassy Note No. 518, Washington, Aug. 13, 1956, both confidential.

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from the fact that the French had agreed to advance funds for ICC local expenses in two installments (two million piasters for September, and six million in a lump sum for the following three months) but had made no commitments for the following year. With regard to the financial "pool" for the expenses of the ICC (to which the United Kingdom, France, the Soviet Union, and China were committed to contribute equally), during the two years since 1954 France had contributed funds averaging 10 million piasters a month and had become a creditor nation. Since June of 1956, however, the French had refused to make any further advances, and these were currently being made by the Indian Government.¹

While not a factor in delaying final resolution of the succession problem, acceptance of the results was threatened when, on August 21, the North Vietnamese Defense Minister, General Giap, sent a letter to the ICC Chairman complaining that Franco-Vietnamese liaison arrangements were incompatible with the Geneva Agreement and the Co-Chairmen's May 8 note. Ambassador Reinhardt reported that the Giap letter appeared to be a "new item in old series standard complaints against GVN for alleged non-implementation Geneva Agreement." He said that, in the opinion of the Embassy, the Giap letter was a propaganda document full of inaccuracies, offering little new, and that it therefore was unworthy of consideration. However, he stated that, according to the British, the Indians on the International Control Commission seemed inclined to support Giap's thesis and to interpret the letter as the North's refusal to "accept validity present arrangements." The Canadians opposed this view, saying that any interpretation was beyond the Commission's competence and could be made only by the Co-Chairmen. Reinhardt said that the Embassy agreed with the Canadian position. The Indians had cabled New Delhi for instructions, and the British in Saigon were suggesting that the Foreign Office instruct their Embassy in New Delhi to support the Canadians.²

Despite North Vietnamese objections, the final transfer of responsibilities for liaison with the ICC and representation on the JAC occurred on September 12 when Colonel Bertrand, Chief of

¹From Saigon, tel. 564, Aug. 16, 1956, confidential.

²From Saigon, tel. 692, Aug. 27, 1956, confidential.

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the French Liaison Mission, and Colonel Hoang Thuy Nam, Chief of the Vietnamese Mission, signed the final minute providing for the transfer in accordance with the terms of the protocol signed on July 14.¹

Even as the de facto transfer took place, the ICC decided to send the Giap letter of August 21 to the Geneva Co-Chairmen. Reinhardt reported that the transmittal letter, dated September 14, contained a lengthy review of French-Vietnamese liaison arrangements, along with comments which were described by the Canadians as undesirable but not as bad as they had feared. The operative paragraph of the ICC letter stated that the French claimed no further direct or special responsibilities for the carrying out of the Geneva Accords and that South Vietnam was prepared to provide "effective cooperation" while refusing to inherit French responsibilities. The ICC then called the attention of the Co-Chairmen to the fact that the North Vietnam authorities had objected to the Franco-Vietnamese agreement on the grounds that, until the French transferred their responsibilities to the Government of Vietnam, the French continued to be bound by them. The ICC maintained that the North Vietnamese contention placed the Commission in a "difficult position".

Embassy Saigon commented that the ICC's action was based on that part of the May 8 note of the Co-Chairmen which requested that they be informed of any difficulties encountered in order to consider whether further measures were required. The ICC had thus gone on record that difficulties had been encountered, and it had requested further instructions. The Embassy felt that the Saigon Government "could, if necessary take strong legalistic stand on its compliance with co-chairmen May 9 [sic] note, but we consider preferable let Giap letter and Commission's latest plaint vegetate."²

¹From Saigon, tel. 890, Sept. 13, 1956, limited official use.

²From Saigon, tel. 991, Sept. 21, 1956, confidential. The full text of the ICC letter of Sept. 14 to the Co-Chairmen is printed in Appendix A of the Seventh Interim Report of the International Commission for Supervision and Control in Vietnam, August 1, 1956 to April 30, 1957 (Vietnam No. 2 (1957)), Cmd. 335 (London, 1957), pp. 21-23.

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The ICC replied to Giap on September 14, informing him that the Commission had asked the Co-Chairmen for new directives for its future work but that, pending further instructions, the ICC would "discuss with" the PAVN Mission in the North and the GVN Mission in the South. In a second letter to Giap on the same day, the ICC referred to French willingness to resume, on an informal basis, their role in the Joint Armistice Commission's operations, and requested the North Vietnamese regime, without prejudice to its position concerning French responsibilities under the Geneva Agreement, to inform the French when the JAC could meet. The Embassy commented: "Thus Franco-GVN liaison arrangements have gained official, de facto, if perhaps only temporary, recognition." "This appears give more reason", the Embassy's cable continued, "for Co-Chairmen to stall on Commission's September 14 note so that this temporary solution, as have many others, might become permanent." Reinhardt thought that the North Vietnamese and the Russians were "obviously aware" of this, and he surmised that their next step (or lack of one) might measure the importance they attached to the ICC's continued presence and functioning.¹

From London, Ambassador Aldrich informed the Department that the British Foreign Office had decided to wait for a Soviet initiative on the ICC note of September 14 to the Co-Chairmen. The Foreign Office had recalled that the Russians had never replied to a United Kingdom note of July 31 expressing willingness to meet as long as the agenda was not limited to the elections issue. The Foreign Office, Aldrich said, believed that a Soviet initiative would not come for "a week or two" because the Russians were occupied "with Yugoslavia and Suez problems". Whenever a Soviet response was received, the Foreign Office said, the British planned to suggest that the Co-Chairmen "take note" of the ICC message of September 14 and ask the ICC to continue as before, referring to the Co-Chairmen any practical difficulties that might arise.²

¹From Saigon, tel. 992, Sept. 21, 1956, confidential.

²From London, tel. 1781, Oct. 1, 1956, secret.

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Chapter V

THE SEARCH FOR LEGAL MEANS FOR AMERICAN REPLACEMENT OF FRENCH MILITARY PERSONNEL TRAINING SOUTH VIETNAMESE ARMED FORCES, 1955-1956

Origins of the Concept of the Temporary Equipment Recovery Mission (TERM)

The South Vietnamese demand of January 18, 1955, for the withdrawal of the French Expeditionary Corps from Vietnam and rapid French compliance with this request had, by the end of 1955, reduced the size of the FEC from its pre-Geneva settlement figure of 185,000 to 30,000 with the remainder scheduled to depart early in 1956. This drastic reduction in armed forces to defend Vietnamese territory south of the 17th parallel was to be balanced by an increase in the size of the South Vietnamese Army from 100,000 to 150,000 men. The question early arose about the training of the additional 50,000.

In accordance with the Ely-Collins Memorandum of Understanding of December 13, 1954,¹ the U.S. Military Assistance Advisory Group (MAAG), organized in September 1950 to supervise the distribution of American military supplies and equipment to French Union Forces fighting the Viet Minh, had taken on the responsibility of sharing with the French the training of the South Vietnamese armed forces. There had been established under MAAG a Training Relations Instruction Mission (TRIM), a combined Franco-American organization to coordinate training advice to the Vietnamese Army previously given separately by MAAG and the French training mission. Reduction of the FEC brought with it a corresponding reduction in the French complement in TRIM, placing that much more responsibility on MAAG for training the Vietnamese, or, as the Department of Defense described the situation, these developments made "difficult, if not impossible, the accomplishment of the mission assigned to the Chief, MAAG Vietnam."²

¹See ante, pp. 54-58.

²Letter from Gordon Gray (Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs) to Walter S. Robertson (Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs), Sept. 27, 1955, secret.

DECLASSIFIED UNCLASSIFIED

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-175-

In these circumstances, the Department of Defense attempted to prevail upon the Department of State either to remove the ceiling "imposed on the MAAG by the Department of State's interpretation of the Geneva Accords" in order to match the acceleration of training of the Vietnamese forces (and also to provide a cover for CIA personnel) or to authorize the use of "temporary duty training teams" which would serve the same purpose.¹ In its reply, the Department of State was careful to point out that its interpretation of the ceiling on MAAG derived from the incontrovertible language of Article 16 of the Agreement on the Cessation of Hostilities in Vietnam, which specifically stated: "With effect from the date of entry into force of the present agreement, the introduction into Viet-Nam of any troop reinforcements and additional military personnel is prohibited." The Department observed that the International Control Commission, the authority charged with investigating apparent breaches of the Cease-Fire,

"would presumably be made aware, perhaps by the Communists, of the presence of U.S. military personnel in Viet-Nam in excess of 342 [the strength of MAAG as of the date of entry into force of the cease-fire on July 21, 1954]. The United States does not have competence to authorize that the established ceiling for military personnel be exceeded. However, this does not, in our view, prevent the utilization of civilian personnel in MAAG for appropriate purposes."²

Under continuing pressure from the Department of Defense, however, and in view of the rapid withdrawal of French TRIM personnel, the Department of State in mid-November 1955 requested the views of Embassy Saigon on the practicality of the United States' "proceeding soon to send additional MAAG personnel", at least to the extent of filling the gap left by French withdrawals, and as to how this might be accomplished "with minimum repercussions".³ The Embassy firmly upheld the Department's

¹Ibid.

²Letter from Robertson to Gray, Oct. 20, 1955, secret.

³To Saigon, tel. 1741, Nov. 18, 1955, secret.

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

DECLASSIFIED

-176-

strict interpretation of Article 16, citing the several assurances the United States had given members of the ICC jointly and severally that the 342-man level of MAAG would not be exceeded and Indian and Canadian objections to having American personnel replace the French in TRIM. Furthermore, the Embassy observed that, according to the French, the ICC was tending to "tighten control on personnel and equipment from Vietnam under stress of certain members" as the Poles and Indians shifted their interest from Articles 14(c) and (d) of the Cease-Fire (concerned with reprisals and transfer of populations between zones) to Articles 16 and 17. The Embassy saw no objection, however, to replacing some of the military in MAAG with civilian personnel.¹

As reported to Embassy Saigon, Secretary Dulles decided, on January 19, 1956, not to accede to an increase in MAAG and not to discuss such a step with the British (as had earlier been suggested by the Embassy). Instead, the Secretary proposed to explore the feasibility of other ways and means of achieving U.S. objectives, "despite assumed limitations on number U.S. military personnel," such as (1) greater use of civilian personnel (including military in civilian status), (2) contracts with business firms for MDAP redistribution assistance, and (3) exploration with the French of the possibility of attaching FEC elements or individuals to MAAG and additional French to TRIM for specified periods. As a palliative to the Department of Defense, Dulles proposed that MAAG be kept at a full active strength of 342 at all times, bringing in additional personnel (and exceeding the ceiling) to replace individuals on medical or travel leave.²

Dulles' tentative decision was offset by a South Vietnamese request that MAAG be increased to 1200 or 1300 men. This bid, embodied in a memorandum handed by Foreign Minister Mau to Ambassador Reinhardt on January 24, was supported by the contention that South Vietnam, as a fully independent state, needed to have its armed forces trained rapidly. The South Vietnamese argued that the spirit of Articles 16 and 17 of the Cease-Fire agreement

¹From Saigon, tel. 2255, Nov. 27, 1955, secret.

²To Saigon, tel. 2503, Jan. 23, 1956, secret.

DECLASSIFIED

DECLASSIFIED

DECLASSIFIED

-177-

UNCLASSIFIED

was designed exclusively to prohibit an increase of military potential on both sides of the demarcation line. With the withdrawal of the French Expeditionary Corps, the military potential below the 17th parallel had been reduced considerably from what it had been at the time the Cease-Fire was signed. Thus, in the view of the South Vietnamese, an increase in American training personnel could hardly be interpreted as violating the Cease-Fire which neither the United States nor South Vietnam had signed.

In sending this information on to Washington, Reinhardt commented that, as he had previously reported, the Indian and Canadian members of the International Control Commission had indicated that it was highly unlikely that the ICC would interpret the Cease-Fire as permitting replacement of departing French troops by Americans in South Vietnam, "or, for that matter, an exchange of Viet Minh troops for Chinese in North Vietnam." The Ambassador stated that, to date, the ICC had maintained that an increase of military forces in either zone was not a violation of the Geneva Accords so long as these forces were not imported.¹

The urgency of the need for some additional American personnel in Vietnam was stressed by Secretary of Defense Wilson in a January 31 letter to Secretary Dulles. Wilson pointed out that the United States had lost control of approximately \$100 million-worth of MDAP materiel in South Vietnam. He added that, contrary to the Collins-Ely agreement of 1954, the French were making unilateral decisions respecting what equipment was to be returned to the United States, "carefully sorting out the useful, serviceable items for their own use, and returning the excess and salvage." Wilson wrote: "We know of no valid reason why U.S. personnel should not be allowed to enter French military storage areas to participate in these determinations." With the withdrawal of the bulk of French forces, Wilson stated, "adequate logistic capability in Free Vietnam no longer exists," and, should hostilities break out in mid-1956, there would be no logistic capability whatsoever.²

¹From Saigon, tel. 2977, Jan. 24, 1956, secret.

²Excerpts and paraphrases in memorandum from Robertson (FE) to Murphy (G), Feb. 2, 1956, secret.

DECLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

DECLASSIFIED

-178-

UNCLASSIFIED

There ensued a high-level meeting of Defense and State officials on February 2, as a result of which Secretary Dulles conceded that the necessity of protecting MDAP material had created an "extraordinary situation in respect to our self-imposed restraints under the Geneva Accords." He therefore proposed to approach the British, Canadians, and French to explore with them the possibility of sending additional U.S. military personnel to Vietnam on a temporary basis solely for the purpose of recovering and preserving equipment which was being lost because of the French withdrawal and the lack of Vietnamese logistical capability. To make this proposal more acceptable, Dulles suggested to Embassy Saigon that the additional forces be limited to 350, that it be specifically understood that they would remain in Vietnam temporarily, that they constitute what might be known as the "Temporary Equipment Recovery Mission" (TERM), and that they operate under (but not as a formal part of) MAAG. The group might be supplemented by 1,000 Filipino and/or Japanese technicians.¹

Embassy Saigon described the Dulles plan for TERM as "ingenious" and observed that it might prove acceptable to the ICC in view of the fact that TERM's mission would be limited to removing military equipment from Vietnam with a time-limit on its operations, provided that the United States would agree to keep the ICC fully informed of the movements and activities of TERM's personnel. MAAG complained, however, that TERM would not solve its difficulties in disposing of the MDAP materiel in Vietnam through processing and returning to the United States all excess equipment and through preserving and giving instruction in the use of that equipment turned over to the South Vietnamese. To accomplish its mission, MAAG contended, a basic minimum of 740 American military technicians would be required, a figure 48 above the total of 692 contemplated with the addition of TERM. Even more would be needed if the French withdrew all of their 232-man complement from TRIM and if the French Air and Navy training missions were discontinued.²

¹To Saigon, tel. 2705, Feb. 9, 1956, secret.

²From Saigon, tel. 3268, Feb. 13, 1956, secret.

DECLASSIFIED

DECLASSIFIED

-179-

UNCLASSIFIED

Attempts To Sell TERM to Britain, Canada,
and France

On February 25, Deputy Under Secretary Murphy handed the British, French, and Canadian Ambassadors notes describing the proposal to send TERM to Vietnam, urging the French to retain their training missions, and offering to intercede with the Diem Government to obtain better conditions under which the French might continue to help train the South Vietnamese armed forces.¹ The French replied with alacrity and some asperity. In a note delivered by Ambassador Couve de Murville to Dulles on February 28, the French contended that the despatch of additional American military personnel to Vietnam would contravene Article 4 of the Geneva Conference Final Declaration as well as Article 16 of the Cease-Fire. They pointed out that the United States had taken no exception to the latter article at the time of signature and had hitherto abided by its terms.

On the question of retaining French training personnel, the French observed that the withdrawal of their forces from Vietnam was the result of a decision of the Vietnamese Government, which had asked that this withdrawal be carried out "in the shortest possible time". While the French Government intended to withdraw all its forces, it would be prepared to study the possibility of maintaining 1,000 troops in South Vietnam for one year, provided (1) the United States abandoned TERM, which was in violation of the Cease-Fire signed by the French High Command, and (2) the Vietnamese Government declared (later specified as "formally and in writing") that the retention of French personnel was not at variance with its request for the withdrawal of French forces and would not prevent dissolution of the French High Command "which is ipso facto the consequence of the withdrawal."

The French took particular umbrage at the American offer to intervene with Diem, a proposal they described as "both untimely and superfluous". "Even had it been otherwise," the French note observed, "the conditions in which the step has been submitted to the French Government would have prevented the latter from agreeing to it."²

¹These notes were based on a memorandum from Sebald (FE) to Murphy (G), Feb. 23, 1956, secret.

²To Saigon, tel. 2950, Feb. 29, 1956, confidential.

DECLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

DECLASSIFIED

-180-

UNCLASSIFIED

Equally vehement was the language used by René Massigli, Secretary-General of the French Foreign Ministry, in his talk with Ambassador Dillon on February 28. The French Government, Massigli said, objected to the American offer to intervene with the Vietnamese Government to secure its permission for the retention of French forces. "In view of the refusal of the United States to be of any help to the French with the Diem Government over the past year," Massigli declared, as paraphrased by the Embassy, "it was adding insult to injury to make such a proposition at this time."

With respect to the introduction of TERM, Massigli stated that the French "could simply not understand why the U.S. was willing to run such a serious risk of provoking a crisis in South Vietnam when so little was at stake." According to French figures, Massigli said, of the 270,000 tons of American and French military equipment in Vietnam at the time of signature of the Cease-Fire, only 10,000 tons remained, and the bulk of this would be removed within the next month. Massigli informed Dillon that the French "would hold firm to their position that they could not allow any of their personnel to remain in Indochina for the purpose of caring for this equipment unless the U.S. gave up its plan of sending additional U.S. military personnel."¹

The upshot of these outraged French protests in Washington and Paris was agreement between the two sides to recheck their respective figures on the amount of MDAP material still in Vietnam. It was also agreed that the whole matter would be discussed by Dulles and Foreign Minister Pineau at the forthcoming SEATO Ministerial Meeting in Karachi. Respecting the American offer to intervene with Saigon in France's behalf, Murphy explained to Roland de Margerie, Director-General of the French Foreign Ministry, on February 29, that the offer "had been simply one of friendly assistance should they [the French] desire it and that the absence of such an offer might

¹From Paris, tel. 3916, Feb. 29, 1956, secret.

UNCLASSIFIED

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have led to allegations in France [that] we [the Americans] were seeking to replace the French military."¹

British and Canadian reactions to the Dulles TERM proposal, communicated to the Department of State on February 28 and March 1, respectively, were not especially encouraging. The British, as did the Canadians, felt that the political repercussions from the introduction of TERM would be deplorable and might jeopardize the chances of reaching a satisfactory modus vivendi in Viet-Nam, an objective to which everything else should be subordinated. Both strongly suggested that, before taking any action, the United States consult with the Government of India. The Canadians also proposed that the United States do its utmost to persuade the French to retain their training missions in Vietnam; if necessary, these could be supplemented by American civilian technicians.²

In light of the views expressed and suggestions made by France, Britain, and Canada, Secretary Dulles discussed the TERM proposal with French Foreign Minister Pineau on March 7 in the course of the SEATO Ministerial Meeting in Karachi. Pineau agreed that the United States should control and maintain the MDAP equipment which had been turned over to the South Vietnamese, but he stated that the introduction of additional American military personnel for this purpose would be in violation of the Cease-Fire, leaving as the only alternatives American civilians or French military personnel retained at the request of the South Vietnamese Government. As matters stood, Pineau observed, the retention of even the small French training missions for the Vietnamese Air Force and Navy (220 and 70, respectively) would be conditional on specific demand by Saigon, for the anti-French atmosphere created by the Diem Government had made the position of the French virtually "impossible".

Dulles contended that TERM, composed of 350 American military personnel in civilian clothes, would not be inconsistent with the Geneva Accords, for the fighting strength of troops in

¹From Paris, tel. 3935, Feb. 29, 1956, secret.

²To Saigon, tel. 2981 Mar. 2, 1956, confidential.

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Vietnam would not be augmented. He cited the value and condition, of and the need to salvage the MDAP equipment, as well as the difficulties connected with sending new materiel to Vietnam of a type already there. Informing Pineau of his intention to discuss the situation with Nehru, Dulles said that, unless there were strong Indian objection, the United States would proceed with TERM and would hope for French cooperation to the extent of retaining some 1,000 personnel in Vietnam. If the Indians objected, the United States would have to reconsider "what line to take".¹

Developments Leading to the Introduction of
TERM Without ICC Approval

On March 10, Dulles proceeded from his talks in Karachi with Pineau to New Delhi where he revealed to Nehru what TERM involved and expressed the hope that the project would have the approval of the Indian Government and the Indian Chairman of the International Control Commission.² India's favorable reaction was communicated by Manilal J. Desai, former ICC Chairman and currently Commonwealth Secretary in the Indian Foreign Ministry, to Ambassador Cooper in New Delhi and transmitted by the latter to Secretary Dulles in Saigon on March 13. The Government of India did not consider the TERM proposal inconsistent with the Geneva Accords if its purpose was to reduce the volume of armament. Desai stated that there was a precedent for the introduction of additional personnel into Vietnam for a limited time and purpose, for a Chinese Communist "cultural mission" had earlier entered North Vietnam for a short time, after having given notice to the ICC. Desai expressed the view that TERM's operations should be conducted under the supervision or with the cognizance of the ICC. By way of procedure, Desai suggested that the American Ambassador in Saigon request the French, as the original recipients of the MDAP equipment, to notify the ICC about TERM, its purpose, number of personnel, and approximate dates of entry and exit. The ICC would then check on the entry and exit of personnel and receive notification of the exit dates and inventory of equipment. The ICC would not check the equipment in exit against inventories except in the cases of equipment being replaced.³

¹From Karachi, SECTO 21, Mar. 8, 1956, secret.

²From New Delhi, SECTO 40, Mar. 10, 1956, secret.

³From New Delhi, tel. 1999 (to Saigon, tel. 48), Mar. 13, 1956.

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DECLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

143

UNCLASSIFIED

SECRET
DECLASSIFIED UNCLASSIFIED

Under instruction from the Department of State, Ambassador Cooper informed Desai in New Delhi, on April 2, of the details of TERM, without, however, discussing the training functions it might perform, which, according to the Department, were "in fact wholly ancillary to the main task of saving equipment."¹ Desai made two suggestions in reply. In view of the fact that the life of the ICC would legally expire in July in the absence of election consultations between North and South Vietnam or of extension by the Geneva Co-Chairmen, the ICC would be competent to authorize the operation of TERM for a twelve-month period. Desai therefore proposed that the United States inform the ICC that a preliminary three months would be required before the length of TERM's service could be determined. Secondly, and more important, Desai urged that TERM be made up of non-uniformed personnel, lest the Polish member of the ICC suspect it of being a training mission.

Desai told Cooper that it would be difficult for the ICC to approve TERM. He added, however, that, on the basis of the facts given, "India would approve, and it would be put through".²

During a visit in Washington in late March, Foreign Minister Pearson gave Canada's blessing to TERM. Armed with Indian and Canadian approval, Ambassador Dillon in Paris approached the French, who offered to serve as intermediary between the United States and the ICC if so desired. Dillon expressed appreciation for the helpful spirit in which the French offer had been made but gave it as his view that, if the Vietnamese were willing, it would be preferable for the Vietnamese Government to perform the function of intermediary with the ICC in view of the facts that (a) the relationship between the French and the ICC would be anything but clear following dissolution of the French High Command in Vietnam and (b) a relationship of sorts had been created between the South Vietnamese Government and ICC by the former's note of April 3 to the British Co-Chairman of the Geneva Conference.³ In light of these circumstances, Dillon suggested that it might be better "if the anomalous French role [vis-a-vis the ICC] were not perpetuated."⁴

¹To New Delhi, tel. 2409, Mar. 28, 1956, secret.

²From New Delhi, tel. 2417, Apr. 2, 1956, secret.

³See ante, pp. 146-148.

⁴From Paris, tel. 4583, Apr. 4, 1956, secret.

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On April 5, the Department of State informed the British, French, Canadian, and Australian Embassies of the intention to proceed with TERM immediately. A similar notification was sent to Embassy Saigon.¹ Ambassador Reinhardt promptly inquired whether TERM was to be despatched prior to official presentation of the plan to the ICC, for it was his understanding that India would support TERM in the ICC but expected the United States to wait until the Commission had decided "at least by a majority" that TERM did not violate the Cease-Fire before launching the project. Reinhardt warned against presenting the Commission with a fait accompli.²

A similar note of caution was sounded by Ambassador Cooper in New Delhi. He declared that any implementation of TERM before its submission to the ICC for approval "will be certain to make the Government of India's support more difficult." Cooper therefore urged "that no [TERM] personnel be actually despatched until the ICC has completed its consideration of the proposal."³

Ambassador Reinhardt in Saigon broached the TERM proposal to Parthasarathi, the Indian Chairman of the ICC, on April 8, and received much the same comments which Cooper had obtained from Desai. Parthasarathi underscored his belief that the introduction of TERM personnel in civilian clothing would make it easier to obtain approval of the ICC, and he urged Reinhardt to provide the ICC with full information about the number of people involved in MAAG and TERM in order to meet any complaints by the Hanoi regime.⁴

Ambassador Cooper laid stress on what he believed to be the basis for India's obliging response to TERM--namely, that India expected the United States to follow procedures acceptable to the ICC. Cooper recommended that the United States adhere to

¹To Saigon, tels. 3362, Apr. 5, and 3375, Apr. 6, 1956, confidential.

²From Saigon, tel. 4058, Apr. 6, 1956, secret.

³From New Delhi, tel. 2205, Apr. 8, 1956, secret.

⁴From Saigon, tel. 4096, Apr. 9, 1956, confidential.

DECLASSIFIED

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ICC requirements. He reported that Desai had proposed, however, that the United States not apply to the ICC for approval of TERM until after the London meeting of the Geneva Co-Chairmen.¹

In light of all the comments received to date, the Departments of State and Defense sent a joint communication to Embassy Saigon and the Chief of MAAG, on April 12, indicating that TERM personnel would not begin to arrive in South Vietnam until May 9, thereby giving what both Departments considered a "reasonable time for [International Control] Commission consideration" of the introduction of TERM. Furthermore, the arrivals of TERM personnel were to be staggered, with the full complement not be achieved until August. With respect to notification of the ICC, however, both Departments agreed to keep this to a minimum "as decided by the Ambassador after consultation with the Chief of MAAG," for neither Department would "countenance Commission control of U.S. military activities in Vietnam once the personnel are on the spot." The question of whether civilian clothing was to be worn by the military personnel comprising TERM would be decided by the Chief of MAAG, the Chief of TERM, and the Ambassador. Regarding the size of TERM, the Department of Defense had finally agreed to the figure of 350 which, when added to MAAG's 342, would bring the total of U.S. military in Vietnam to 692. In return, however, the Department of State gave in to Defense's demand for a grand total of 740, with the understanding that no more than 692 would be present in Vietnam at any one time.²

On April 20, the Department urged Ambassador Reinhardt to present the TERM project immediately to the ICC, "through channels you select," whether or not consideration by the full Commission could be obtained at once. The Department declared itself "most anxious for the Commission's approval prior to May 9 so that the first increment of [TERM] personnel may arrive on that date." The steps taken by the Geneva Co-Chairmen in London had convinced the Department that the functions of the ICC would be continued for some time to come.³

¹From New Delhi, tel. 2221, Apr. 10, 1956, secret; see ante, pp. 156 et seq.

²To Saigon, tel. 3430, Apr. 12, 1956, confidential.

³To Saigon, tel. 3534, Apr. 20, 1956, secret.

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Reinhardt had already, on the 20th, delivered a note on TERM to the Saigon Government for transmittal to the French which read as follows:

"The Secretariat of State for Foreign Affairs of Vietnam presents its compliments to the High Commissariat of the French Republic and has the honor to inform it that it has been apprised by the Embassy of the United States of the wish of the American Government to send to Vietnam a temporary military mission composed of 350 American military personnel entitled TERM (Temporary Equipment Recovery Mission).

"The Mission in question will be responsible for supervising recovery of materiel resulting from American military aid and for outshipment from Vietnam of surplus of this materiel.

"Arrival in Saigon of the first contingent of personnel of this mission is scheduled for the first half of May 1956.

"The Embassy of the United States has stressed the urgent need to protect and preserve large quantities of materiel of American origin which would otherwise pass beyond the possibility of recovery, and surplus of which should be outshipped from Vietnam. In view of the task assigned to the mission which the American Government proposes to send to Vietnam, and also taking into account that the number of American military personnel in Vietnam employed within the MAAG framework has never exceed the figure of 342 (sent in July 1954), the Vietnamese Government plans to give its consent to the arrival of this mission.

"The Secretariat of State for Foreign Affairs would appreciate it if the High Commissariat would be kind enough to transmit the preceding information to the International Control Commission."¹

On the following day, in accordance with Washington's instructions, Reinhardt urged the French to present TERM to the ICC with despatch.² Unfortunately, however, the ICC was in no

¹From Saigon, tel. 4243, Apr. 23, 1956, confidential.

²From Saigon, tels. 4228 and 4238, Apr. 21, 1956, secret.

~~SECRET~~ UNCLASSIFIED

186
DECLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

position to take any action on TERM at that time, for, despite the extension of its mandate authorized by the Geneva Co-Chairmen, with the imminence of the dissolution of the French High Command, the Commission questioned its right to function and, as reported by Reinhardt, was "now fully occupied with debating the question of its own survival." Reinhardt therefore again urged the Department not to present the ICC with a fait accompli and asked that "the arrival of TERM personnel be delayed until the ICC has acted."¹

The Department of Defense accordingly agreed to delay departure of the first installment of TERM personnel already assembled on the West Coast, with the understanding, however, that Embassy Saigon would do all it could to obtain speedy consideration of the TERM project by the ICC.² In talks with Secretary Dulles in Paris on May 6, in conjunction with the NATO Ministerial Meeting, British Foreign Secretary Selwyn Lloyd agreed with the American view that the delay in the despatch of TERM could not be extended beyond the end of May.³

Ambassador Reinhardt encountered further difficulties in his efforts to "sell" TERM to the ICC. The French authorities in Vietnam had transmitted the text of the U.S.-South Vietnamese note on TERM to the ICC on April 25. The Indian Chairman of the ICC, Parthasarathi, told Reinhardt that he feared the note placed too much emphasis on the "military" nature of TERM's mission. He therefore proposed a revised text to read as follows:

"A temporary technical ordnance mission of the United States Government proposes to visit Vietnam for the purpose of selecting American military materiel to be shipped out of Vietnam. The mission in question would be composed of 350 United States personnel.

"It is the belief of the Government of the United States that such a mission should begin operating at the earliest possible date, and consequently it is hoped that the first contingent might arrive in Vietnam before the end of May 1956."

¹From Saigon, tel. 4344, Apr. 30, 1956, confidential.

²To Saigon, tel. 3647, May 1, 1956, confidential.

³From Paris, SECTO 30, May 6, 1956, secret.

DECLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

~~SECRET~~
189-
DECLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

Reinhardt pointed out to the Department that, in view of the fact that the Polish member of the ICC had received a copy of the original note, the Indian revision would only serve to make matters worse when the two versions were compared. He had therefore asked the Indian and Canadian representatives on the ICC to review the possibility of considering the original note only.¹

The Department displayed some impatience with this new set of "delays and complications" and informed Reinhardt that it was quite willing to accept the Indian revision, with certain modifications, "if ICC approval seems assured thereby." The Department's modification of the Indian revision read as follows:

"As the International Control Commission is aware, a temporary technical ordnance mission of the United States Government, composed of 350 United States personnel, proposes to visit Viet-Nam for the purpose of selecting American military materiel for recovery and for out-shipment from Viet-Nam of surplus such materiel. It is the belief of the Government of the United States that such a mission should begin operating at the earliest possible date, and, consequently, the Government of Viet-Nam is giving its consent to the arrival of the first contingent of this personnel before the end of May 1956."

The Department went even further by proposing that the ICC consider either note "as it sees fit as long as the [TERM] project is not disapproved and personnel start entering in May." The Department instructed Reinhardt to inform the Indians, Canadians, and Vietnamese that, since the United States had accepted the substance of the Indian revision, it was assumed that the ICC would act on TERM immediately, for American personnel "will in any case begin arriving in Viet-Nam before the end of May."²

On May 15, Parthasarathi informed Reinhardt that the sending of a revised note to the ICC was still desirable. He pointed out that the ICC was in the process of developing new procedures

¹From Saigon, tel. 4421, May 7, 1956, secret.

²To Saigon, tel. 3725, May 9, 1956, secret.

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DECLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

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on the basis of its exchanges with the Geneva Co-Chairmen¹ and would soon resume its meetings, permitting it to consider TERM. He asked that the arrival of TERM personnel in Vietnam be delayed until mid-June--a delay which Reinhardt explained would be impossible.²

The new note on TERM, dated May 15, was delivered to the ICC on the 20th. The ICC informed the French Liaison Mission, on the 26th, that the TERM project was under consideration on the basis of the two notes of April 21 and May 15 and asked that the Vietnamese Foreign Ministry be informed that the "military entry of these military personnel should not be effected before the decision of the Commission is communicated to it."³ On May 28, Reinhardt informed the Department that South Vietnamese Foreign Minister Mau proposed to reply to the ICC that, because of the close timing involved, it would not be possible to hold up the arrival of the first contingent of TERM, scheduled to reach Saigon on the 30th.⁴

As a consequence of these developments, at a high-level meeting in the Department of State on May 28, it was decided not to ask the Department of Defense to impose a further delay on the despatch of TERM. Most of the participants agreed that the United States had already given the ICC more than ample time to consider the TERM project. The meeting proposed to send a summary history of the TERM negotiations to the American Embassies in New Delhi and Ottawa to aid the latter in explaining to the Indian and Canadian Governments why the United States felt impelled to proceed with TERM prior to obtaining final Commission approval.⁵

¹See ante, pp. 157-158, 160, 162, and 165.

²From Saigon, tel. 4503, May 15, 1956, secret.

³From Saigon, tels. 4556 and 4621, May 20 and 26, 1956, secret.

⁴From Saigon, tel. 4643, May 28, 1956, secret.

⁵Memorandum of conversation among Murphey (G), Bennett (G), Robertson (FE), Sebald (FE), Young (SEA), and Kattenburg (SEA), May 28, 1956, secret.

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DECLASSIFIED UNCLASSIFIED

-191-
DECLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

On May 29, Parthasarathi in Hanoi informed Reinhardt in Saigon that the ICC would begin its consideration of the TERM project on the following day and that, as a result of preliminary discussion, it appeared likely that the Commission would give its unanimous approval. With this prospect in view, Parthasarathi again urged that TERM's arrival be postponed until mid-June, lest the Commission's expected decision be jeopardized.¹

Direct Indian reaction to the American decision to proceed with TERM prior to ICC approval was registered by Desai in New Delhi in a talk with the American Chargé on May 30. Desai indicated that the entry of TERM into Vietnam might be considered legal, provided "control and supervision of these personnel by an ICC fixed team will be observed." He took exception, however, to the American contention that TERM had been approved by India, for, as Desai was careful to point out, only the ICC itself could take such a step. He warned that the "Communists will of course allege that the ICC is being flouted ... by the United States Government, but this will be for propaganda."²

In response to an aide-mémoire submitted by Ambassador Merchant on May 30, the Canadians expressed some concern that the TERM issue should be the first question for the ICC to take up under its new mandate from the Geneva Co-Chairmen. While hoping that the TERM operation "would go through smoothly", with no complications for the United States or the ICC, the Canadians recommended that Washington continue to heed the Indians, for the crux of the matter of introducing TERM would be Indian reaction to what "in effect" would be a fait accompli. Although Parthasarathi had proved reasonable up to that point, he was, in the Canadians' belief, increasingly subject to guidance from New Delhi, and this would be significant if the Indians (particularly Krishna Menon) should react angrily to the unilateral American action.³

On May 31, the ICC informally communicated to the Vietnamese Government and the American and British Embassies in Saigon the conditions it wished to impose on TERM's operations. These

¹From Saigon, tel. 4648, May 29, 1956, secret.

²From New Delhi, tel. 2655, May 30, 1956, confidential.

³From Ottawa, tel. 438, May 30, 1956, confidential.

DECLASSIFIED

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included the understanding that TERM's mission would be

"solely to select war materiel and military equipment belonging to the United States Government for export out of Vietnam and that its activities will not extend to other duties and functions of a military nature, such as the maintenance and preservation of war materiel and military equipment in South Vietnam."

In addition, the Commission requested data on the total number of American military personnel, with their names and designations, postings and functions, probable duration of stay, and expected date of entry. If satisfied with this information, the Commission would agree to the entry of TERM, provided that (1) ICC inspection teams might check actual arrivals against the prior information supplied by the United States; (2) the South Vietnamese Government would submit fortnightly statements to the ICC regarding progress of work, change of postings, and time estimated as necessary for completion of TERM's mission; (3) the ICC might review TERM's mission after three months; and (4) the Commission be allowed to conduct spot checks to satisfy itself that the conditions laid down were being respected. The Commission requested an immediate reply to enable it to reach a final decision "without further delay".¹

The ICC's conditions were embodied in a message dated May 29; this communication was not formally delivered, however, by the French Military Mission to the Saigon Government until June 6. This circumstance gave the Departments of State and Defense time in which to make suggestions respecting a South Vietnamese reply to the Commission. The two Departments jointly composed a message sent to Reinhardt in Saigon on June 8 in which it was pointed out that to meet all of the ICC's conditions and requirements "would only invite later interference with MAAG and eventual emasculation of all U.S. military and police programs in Vietnam." The message stressed that American policy "should strive to maintain a balance between two objectives": (1) preserving the armistice and (2) strengthening South Vietnam. In connection with the question of spot inspections of TERM activities by the ICC, State and Defense suggested that the South Vietnamese Government "might wish to state that it would not ... allow

¹From Saigon, tel. 4687, May 31, 1956, confidential.

DECLASSIFIED

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UNCLASSIFIED

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DECLASSIFIED

inspection by the Commission where it was informed that a similar right of inspection had been denied the Commission in North Vietnam or where such inspection impedes the functioning of TERM personnel."¹

In its reply of June 8 to the ICC's message of May 29, the South Vietnamese Government declared that the first objective of TERM would be to locate, identify, and examine American materiel still in Vietnam before deciding which items might be in excess of Vietnamese military needs and subject to shipment back to the United States. A minimum period of three months would be required for TERM to determine the dimensions of its task. Successive arrivals of personnel, not to exceed 350, would be reported to the ICC in advance "insofar as possible". ICC teams would be allowed to take note of facts derived from aircraft manifests which would be communicated to the ICC upon request. The Vietnamese Government pointed out that, because of the wide geographic distribution of American materiel in Vietnam, TERM personnel would be obliged to make frequent moves and their exact functions would change from time to time; their operations would remain, however, within the general framework of the mission as already described to the ICC.²

In the meantime, TERM had already begun to arrive in Saigon. Two plane-loads of personnel touched down on May 30. Though notified the previous day of the flight schedule, the ICC representatives witnessed the arrival of the second plane only, for the first one landed ahead of its ETA. Because of lack of coordination among the several South Vietnamese ministries involved, the ICC was denied the examination of the manifests of either aircraft.³

In a lengthy discussion with Reinhardt in Saigon on June 16, Parthasarathi complained that TERM had been brought in without ICC approval and that the ICC had been denied its minimal inspection rights. He then urged that South Vietnam and the United States facilitate the ICC's approval of TERM by supplying the Commission with the simple statement that TERM's purpose was to inventory and ship out American materiel from Vietnam and that

¹To Saigon, tel. 3992, June 8, 1956, secret.

²From Saigon, tel. 4790, June 9, 1956, secret.

³From Saigon, tel. 4765, June 7, 1956, confidential.

UNCLASSIFIED

DECLASSIFIED

194
DECLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

the ICC would be provided periodic notifications of the whereabouts of personnel and be granted the right of inspection and spot checks. From this standpoint, Parthasarathi said, the South Vietnamese communication of June 8 to the ICC had proved unsatisfactory. Reinhardt expressed his doubt that South Vietnam, as a newly independent nation, would wish "to go all the way in meeting the Commission's wishes."¹

Earlier in the month, Reinhardt had informed the Department of State of his view that, in any future communications with India and Canada, as two of the three countries composing the ICC, care should be taken to "avoid any reference to our advisory role with the Government of Vietnam on ICC matters, particularly on specific problems." He had made this suggestion in light of the fact that South Vietnam would become increasingly responsible for drafting its replies to messages from the ICC. As Reinhardt put it, "the Embassy does not wish to become unduly involved as a go-between or bear the brunt of ICC criticism for any unsatisfactory attitudes the Government of Vietnam may in the future adopt toward the ICC."²

Proof of the growing independence of South Vietnam in its dealings with the International Control Commission came on June 27 when the Saigon Government replied to an oral request of the previous day by Parthasarathi for additional information about TERM in order that the ICC might cope with a complaint lodged by the authorities in Hanoi. Reinhardt had reported his opinion that Saigon would not add anything to its June 8 communication to the ICC "at least until receipt of a further written query from the ICC."³ Contrary to Reinhardt's estimate, South Vietnamese Foreign Minister Mau informed the ICC that, as of that date, only a portion of the total of 350 TERM personnel had arrived in Vietnam and that, in view of the urgency of the task of checking American materiel, MAAG had transferred to TERM additional technical personnel from its own staff "to perform this purely technical job". Mau transmitted a list of TERM

¹From Saigon, tel. 4884, June 16, 1956, secret.

²From Saigon, tel. 4790, June 9, 1956, secret.

³From Saigon, tel. 5005, June 26, 1956, confidential.

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personnel, including the technical personnel loaned by MAAG. He stated that there would be no objection to the ICC's acquainting itself with the work of TERM "with the prior concurrence of the Vietnamese authorities responsible for the base visited" by ICC inspection teams.¹

Following what Reinhardt described as this "surprisingly forthcoming" letter from the South Vietnamese Government, one which Parthasarathi called "very satisfactory", there ensued nearly a month in which the ICC Chairman attempted to obtain the Commission's unanimous approval of TERM or, short of that, to soften the negative Polish reaction in order to discourage the Polish member from sending a strong minority report to the Geneva Co-Chairmen. Reinhardt told the Department of State that he felt it advisable to let Parthasarathi "move at his own pace without further prodding from us."²

Parthasarathi's efforts met with but moderate success. On July 23, the ICC addressed a message to the Government of South Vietnam to make the following points:

(1) The ICC regretted the entry of TERM while the question of its approval was still under consideration.

(2) The Commission understood that TERM would be used for no other purpose than that stated in the Vietnamese Government's letters of June 8 and 27--i.e., to sort out and catalog American military equipment in order to return the surplus to the United States--and requested confirmation of this understanding.

(3) The ICC requested the names of actual TERM personnel (as separate from the MAAG personnel on loan to TERM) and a list of personnel "likely to enter Vietnam", to enable ICC teams to control their entry.

(4) The Commission requested "further details" concerning TERM (designation of each person by name, rank, duty station, and function).

(5) The ICC asked for fortnightly reports of TERM activities and progress of its work.

¹From Saigon, tel. 5044, June 29, 1956, confidential.

²From Saigon, tel. 279, July 23, 1956, confidential.

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(6) The Commission noted South Vietnam's agreement to spot checks of TERM's operations by ICC mobile teams and declared it would notify the French Liaison Mission whenever such checks were to be made.

(7) Finally, the ICC asked that "pending the final decision of the ICC, which will be conveyed to the French Liaison Mission on receipt of a reply to this letter, no further introduction of TERM personnel should take place."¹

The Department of State urged that the Vietnamese reply to the ICC be conciliatory in tone without, however, departing substantially from what had been conceded in the June 27 letter. It also took the position that further approaches to New Delhi and Ottawa to change the ICC's stand on TERM would be fruitless.²

Because of the ICC's position, the Saigon Government delayed its reply. The Vietnamese Foreign Office drafted a response in consultation with the American Embassy. In September, after learning that all TERM personnel had arrived in Vietnam, Saigon considered sending off its August draft to the ICC, then changed its mind.³ Thus, the fact which emerged from these prolonged exchanges between the Government of South Vietnam and the International Control Commission was the introduction of TERM without ICC approval.

Incorporation of All Training Functions Under MAAS

The prospective establishment of TERM, coupled with the dissolution of the French High Command in Vietnam, raised problems of a bilateral nature between the United States and France respecting the training of the 50,000 men to be added to the South Vietnamese forces to offset the loss of the departing French troops. On April 23, 1956, representatives of the French Embassy called at the Department of State to impart the French Government's decision to seek an "entirely new agreement on the respective French and U.S. roles in training Viet-Nam forces" to replace the Ely-Collins minute of understanding of December 1954.⁴ The French wished to know (1) whether American

¹From Saigon, tel. 309, July 25, 1956, confidential.

²To Saigon, tel. 302, Aug. 1, 1956, confidential.

³From Saigon, desp. 181, Dec. 17, 1956, confidential.

⁴See ante,

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DECLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

196
DECLASSIFIED

interests in retaining French training missions, as expressed by Dulles to Pineau at Karachi,¹ envisaged French participation in whatever body was devised to succeed TRIM; (2) whether the United States proposed that TRIM would cease to exist on April 28 (the day of the dissolution of the French High Command); and (3) what form the successor body to TRIM would take. The French expressed the belief that, in order properly to operate their training missions, they would have to have a voice in the over-all programming of military training--however it was handled by TRIM's successor.²

In point of fact, on April 28, Lieutenant General Samuel Williams, Chief of MAAG in Vietnam, issued an order terminating TRIM and establishing in its place a Combat Arms Training and Organization Division (CATO) under his own command. This move was followed by apparent French acceptance of the establishment of an "Advisory Directorate Coordinating Group" to be headed by General Williams and staffed by one French, one South Vietnamese, and one American representative (in addition to General Williams).³ It subsequently developed, however, that the French much preferred having a South Vietnamese representative chair the Advisory Group, contrary to the wishes of President Diem, who demanded General Williams by name as head of the Group.⁴

Matters came to a head in mid-August when President Diem discussed with French Ambassador Hoppenot a draft decree setting up a Committee for the Instruction of the Vietnamese Armed Forces. The Committee, to serve under the direction of the South Vietnamese Minister of Defense, was to consist of a President of the Committee would have two functions: (1) carry out the instruction program laid down by the Minister of Defense and (2) verify the condition of the materiel placed at the disposal of the Vietnamese Armed Forces for their instruction and training. The Committee itself would make suggestions respecting training within the framework of the program. The draft decree then specifically designated General Williams as President of the Committee.

¹See ante, pp. 181-182.

²To Saigon, tel. 3582, Apr. 25, 1956, secret.

³From Saigon, tel. 4395, May 5, 1956, secret.

⁴From Saigon, tel. 433, Aug. 4, 1956, secret.

DECLASSIFIED

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The French naturally objected to the designation of Williams as President, for this action placed them in a "subordinate position". It was at Diem's insistence, however, that Williams had been named: he outranked all other military people and represented the country which provided the overwhelming bulk of the materiel.¹ Nonetheless, the French Foreign Office delivered to the American Embassy in Paris an aide-memoire on August 14 "very strongly objecting to (Diem's) draft decree". The aide-memoire pointed out that it had been Secretary Dulles who, at the SEATO meeting in Karachi on March 7, had asked that the French retain their training missions in Vietnam -- a request subsequently backed up by the Government of Vietnam. From the French point of view, the draft decree, while technically a Vietnamese administrative measure, bore marks that the "composition and Presidency of the Committee (could not have) been decided without American military representatives having been consulted." The aide-memoire concluded that the French Government could not agree to subordinate the activities of the French training missions to an American President of the proposed Committee and that, if a new formula could not be found, the French Government "will be obliged to renounce maintaining its instruction missions in Vietnam."²

Informed of the French objections to the Vietnamese draft decree, Embassy Saigon responded immediately that the Embassy had not been consulted about its contents before they had been revealed to the French, although President Diem had told Admiral Radford during the latter's visit to Saigon on July 26 of his intention to name General Williams President of the proposed Committee. The powers given the Committee and its President were entirely the concept of the Government of Vietnam. The designation of a committee to supervise the training of the Vietnamese Armed Forces represented a compromise on the part of Diem, who had originally thought in terms of having a single officer in charge of training. For its part the Embassy had never supported the idea of bringing the French training missions under American control and had, in fact, consistently pressed the Government of Vietnam to retain the French missions, "which Diem was (and still may be) reluctant to do."³

¹From Saigon, tel. 536, Aug. 13, 1956, secret.

²From Paris, tel. 788, Aug. 14, 1956, secret; desp. 296, Aug. 16, 1956, secret.

³From Saigon, tel. 567, Aug. 16, 1956, secret.

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The French in Saigon then considered two alternatives: (1) acceptance of an American President of the proposed committee, provided the French committee member was allowed to take up any differences directly with President Diem or his representative, or (2) designation of the Vietnamese committee member as committee President. MAAG objected to the second alternative on the grounds that the whole purpose of setting up the committee was "to place the Chief of MAAG in an overall supervisory position in a manner which, it is hoped, will prove palatable to the French."

With reference to the possibility that the French might withdraw their training missions altogether, MAAG estimated that an additional 71 American military personnel would be required to replace the French instructors (68 for the Vietnamese Air Force and 3 for the Navy), increasing the total combined strength of MAAG and TERM to 763.¹ The Embassy commented that, in view of the fact that the ICC had yet to give its approval to TERM, it was difficult to conceive a way in which the Government of Vietnam could secure the Commission's permission for American replacements of the French, should this contingency arise.²

As matters turned out, President Diem let his draft decree establishing a Committee for the Instruction of the Vietnamese Armed Forces fall in abeyance.³ In any event, the need for such an arrangement was negated in the following year when the Vietnamese Government asked the French to withdraw all their military instructors.

¹This figure did not include the 48 additional troops replacing individuals on medical or travel leave; see ante, p. 176.

²From Saigon, tel. 761, Sept. 1, 1956, secret.

³From Saigon, tel. 1580, Nov. 9, 1956, confidential.

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APPENDIX A

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AGREEMENT ON THE CESSATION OF HOSTILITIES
IN VIETNAM, JULY 20, 1954 (EXCERPTS)*

CHAPTER III

Ban on the Introduction of Fresh Troops, Military
Personnel, Arms, and Munitions. Military Bases

Article 16

With effect from the date of entry into force of the present Agreement, the introduction into Viet-Nam of any troop reinforcements and additional military personnel is prohibited.

It is understood, however, that the rotation of units and groups of personnel, the arrival in Viet-Nam of individual personnel on a temporary duty basis and the return to Viet-Nam of individual personnel after short periods of leave or temporary duty outside Viet-Nam shall be permitted under the conditions laid down below:

- (a) Rotation of units (defined in paragraph (c) of this Article), and groups of personnel shall not be permitted for French Union troops stationed north of the provisional military demarcation line laid down in Article 1 of the present Agreement, during the withdrawal period provided for in Article 2.

However, under the heading of individual personnel not more than fifty (50) men, including officers, shall during any one month be permitted to enter that part of the country north of the provisional military demarcation line on a temporary duty basis or to return there after short periods of leave or temporary duty outside Viet-Nam.

- (b) "Rotation" is defined as the replacement of units or groups of personnel by other units of the same echelon or by personnel who are arriving in Viet-Nam territory to do their overseas service there;
- (c) The units rotated shall never be larger than a battalion--or the corresponding echelon for air and naval forces;

*Text taken from American Foreign Policy, 1950-1955: Basic Documents, pp. 750-764. The preceding chapters of the cease-fire agreement have been omitted because they were generally complied with.

DECLASSIFIED

DECLASSIFIED

- (d) Rotation shall be conducted on a man-for-man basis, provided, however, that in any one quarter neither party shall introduce more than fifteen thousand five hundred (15,500) members of its armed forces into Viet-Nam under the rotation policy.
- (e) Rotation units (defined in paragraph (c) of this Article) and groups of personnel, and the individual personnel mentioned in this Article, shall enter and leave Viet-Nam only through the entry points enumerated in Article 20 below;
- (f) Each party shall notify the Joint Commission and the International Commission at least two days in advance of any arrivals or departure of units, groups of personnel and individual personnel in or from Viet-Nam. Reports on the arrivals or departures of units, groups of personnel and individual personnel in or from Viet-Nam shall be submitted daily to the Joint Commission and the International Commission.

All the above-mentioned notifications and reports shall indicate the places and dates of arrival or departure and the number of persons arriving or departing;

- (g) The International Commission, through its Inspection Teams, shall supervise and inspect the rotation of units and groups of personnel and the arrival and departure of individual personnel as authorized above, at the points of entry enumerated in Article 20 below.

Article 17

- (a) With effect from the date of entry into force of the present Agreement, the introduction into Viet-Nam of any reinforcements in the form of all types of arms, munitions and other war material, such as combat aircraft, naval craft, pieces of ordnance, jet engines and jet weapons and armoured vehicles, is prohibited.
- (b) It is understood, however, that war material, arms and munitions which have been destroyed, damaged, worn out or used up after the cessation of hostilities may be replaced on the basis of piece-for-piece of the same type and with similar characteristics. Such replacements of war material, arms and munitions shall not be permitted for French Union troops stationed north of the provisional military demarcation line laid down in article 1 of the present Agreement, during the withdrawal period provided for in Article 2.

Naval craft may perform transport operations between the regrouping zones

DECLASSIFIED

-202-
DECLASSIFIED

- (c) The war material, arms and munitions for replacement purposes provided for in paragraph (b) of this Article, shall be introduced into Viet-Nam only through the points of entry enumerated in Article 20 below. War material, arms and munitions to be replaced shall be shipped from Viet-Nam only through the points of entry enumerated in Article 20 below;
- (d) Apart from the replacements permitted within the limits laid down in paragraph (b) of this Article, the introduction of war material, arms and munitions of all types in the form of unassembled parts for subsequent assembly is prohibited.
- (e) Each party shall notify the Joint Commission and the International Commission at least two days in advance of any arrivals or departures which may take place of war material, arms and munitions of all types.

In order to justify the requests for the introduction into Viet-Nam of arms, munitions and other war material (as defined in paragraph (a) of this Article) for replacement purposes, a report concerning each incoming shipment shall be submitted to the Joint Commission and the International Commission. Such reports shall indicate the use made of the items so replaced;

- (f) The International Commission, through its Inspection Teams, shall supervise and inspect the replacements permitted in the circumstances laid down in this Article, at the points of entry enumerated in Article 20 below.

Article 18

With effect from the date of entry into force of the present Agreement, the establishment of new military bases is prohibited throughout Viet-Nam territory.

Article 19

With effect from the date of entry into force of the present Agreement, no military base under the control of a foreign State may be established in the re-grouping zone of either party; the two parties shall ensure that the zones assigned to them do not adhere to any military alliance and are not used for the resumption of hostilities or to further an aggressive policy.

DECLASSIFIED

Article 20

The points of entry into Viet-Nam for rotation personnel and replacements of material are fixed as follows:

--Zones to the north of the provisional military demarcation line:
Laokay, Langson, Tien-Yen, Haiphong, Vinh, Dong-Hoi, Muong-Sen;

--Zone to the south of the provisional military demarcation line:
Tourane, Quinhon, Nhatrang, Bangoi, Saigon, Cap St. Jacques, Tanchau.

CHAPTER VI

Joint Commission and International Commission for
Supervision and Control in Viet-Nam

28. Responsibility for the execution of the agreement on the cessation of hostilities shall rest with the parties.

29. An International Commission shall ensure the control and supervision of this execution.

30. In order to facilitate, under the conditions shown below, the execution of provisions concerning joint actions by the two parties a Joint Commission shall be set up in Viet-Nam.

31. The Joint Commission shall be composed of an equal number of representatives of the Commanders of the two parties.

32. The Presidents of the delegations to the Joint Commission shall hold the rank of General.

The Joint Commission shall set up joint groups the number of which shall be determined by mutual agreement between the parties. The joint groups shall be composed of an equal number of officers from both parties. Their location on the demarcation line between the re-grouping zones shall be determined by the parties whilst taking into account the powers of the Joint Commission.

DECLASSIFIED

33. The Joint Commission shall ensure the execution of the following provisions of the Agreement on the cessation of hostilities:

- (a) A simultaneous and general cease-fire in Viet-Nam for all regular and irregular armed forces of the two parties.
- (b) A re-groupment of the armed forces of the two parties.
- (c) Observance of the demarcation lines between the re-grouping zones and of the demilitarized sectors.

Within the limits of its competence it shall help the parties to execute the said provisions, shall ensure liaison between them for the purpose of preparing and carrying out plans for the application of these provisions, and shall endeavour to solve such disputed questions as may arise between the parties in the course of executing these provisions.

34. An International Commission shall be set up for the control and supervision of the application of the provisions of the agreement on the cessation of hostilities in Viet-Nam. It shall be composed of representatives of the following States: Canada, India, and Poland.

It shall be presided over by the Representative of India.

35. The International Commission shall set up fixed and mobile inspection teams, composed of an equal number of officers appointed by each of the above-mentioned States. The fixed teams shall be located at the following points: Laokay, Langson, Tien-Yen, Haiphong, Vinh, Dong-Hoi, Muong-Sen, Tourane, Quinhon, Nhatrang, Bangoi, Saigon, Cap St. Jacques, Tranchau. These points of location may, at a later date, be altered at the request of the Joint Commission, or of one of the parties, or of the International Commission itself, by agreement between the International Commission and the command of the party concerned. The zones of action of the mobile teams shall be the regions bordering the land and sea frontiers of Viet-Nam, the demarcation lines between the re-grouping zones and the demilitarized zones. Within the limits of these zones they shall have the right to move freely and shall receive from the local civil and military authorities all facilities they may require for the fulfilment of their tasks (provision of personnel, placing at their disposal documents needed for supervision, summoning witnesses necessary for holding enquiries, ensuring the security and freedom of movement of the inspection teams, etc. . . .). They shall have at their disposal

DECLASSIFIED

205-
DECLASSIFIED

such modern means of transport, observation and communication as they may require. Beyond the zones of action as defined above, the mobile teams may, by agreement with the command of the party concerned, carry out other movements within the limits of the tasks given them by the present agreement.

36. The International Commission shall be responsible for supervising the proper execution by the parties of the provisions of the agreement. For this purpose it shall fulfil the tasks of control, observation, inspection and investigation connected with the application of the provisions of the agreement on the cessation of hostilities, and it shall in particular:

- (a) Control the movement of the armed forces of the two parties, effected within the framework of the regroupment plan.
- (b) Supervise the demarcation lines between the regrouping areas, and also the demilitarized zones.
- (c) Control the operations of releasing prisoners of war and civilian internees.
- (d) Supervise at ports and airfields as well as along all frontiers of Viet-Nam the execution of the provisions of the agreement on the cessation of hostilities, regulating the introduction into the country of armed forces, military personnel and of all kinds of arms, munitions and war material.

37. The International Commission shall, through the medium of the inspection teams mentioned above, and as soon as possible either on its own initiative, or at the request of the Joint Commission, or of one of the parties, undertake the necessary investigations both documentary and on the ground.

38. The inspection teams shall submit to the International Commission the results of their supervision, their investigation and their observations, furthermore they shall draw up such special reports as they may consider necessary or as may be requested from them by the Commission. In the case of a disagreement within the teams, the conclusions of each member shall be submitted to the Commission.

39. If any one inspection team is unable to settle an incident or considers that there is a violation or a threat of a serious violation the International Commission shall be informed; the latter shall study

DECLASSIFIED

DECLASSIFIED

the reports and the conclusions of the inspection teams and shall inform the parties of the measures which should be taken for the settlement of the incident, ending of the violation or removal of the threat of violation.

40. When the Joint Commission is unable to reach an agreement on the interpretation to be given to some provision or on the appraisal of a fact, the International Commission shall be informed of the disputed question. Its recommendations shall be sent directly to the parties and shall be notified to the Joint Commission.

41. The recommendations of the International Commission shall be adopted by majority vote, subject to the provisions contained in article 42. If the votes are divided the chairman's vote shall be decisive.

The International Commission may formulate recommendations concerning amendments and additions which should be made to the provisions of the agreement on the cessation of hostilities in Viet-Nam, in order to ensure a more effective execution of that agreement. These recommendations shall be adopted unanimously.

42. When dealing with questions concerning violations, or threats of violations, which might lead to a resumption of hostilities, namely:

- (a) Refusal by the armed forces of one party to effect the movements provided for in the regroupment plan;
- (b) Violation by the armed forces of one of the parties of the regrouping zones, territorial waters, or air space of the other party;

the decisions of the International Commission must be unanimous.

43. If one of the parties refuses to put into effect a recommendation of the International Commission, the parties concerned or the Commission itself shall inform the members of the Geneva Conference.

If the International Commission does not reach unanimity in the cases provided for in article 42, it shall submit a majority report and one or more minority reports to the members of the Conference.

The International Commission shall inform the members of the Conference in all cases where its activity is being hindered.

DECLASSIFIED

307
DECLASSIFIED

44. The International Commission shall be set up at the time of the cessation of hostilities in Indo-China in order that it should be able to fulfil the tasks provided for in article 36.

45. The International Commission for Supervision and Control in Viet-Nam shall act in close co-operation with the International Commissions for Supervision and Control in Cambodia and Laos.

The Secretaries-General of these three Commissions shall be responsible for co-ordinating their work and for relations between them.

46. The International Commission for Supervision and Control in Viet-Nam may, after consultation with the International Commissions for Supervision and Control in Cambodia and Laos, and having regard to the development of the situation in Cambodia and Laos, progressively reduce its activities. Such a decision must be adopted unanimously.

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47. All the provisions of the present Agreement, save the second sub-paragraph of Article 11, shall enter into force at 2400 hours (Geneva time) on 22 July 1954.

Done in Geneva at 2400 hours on the 20th of July 1954 in French and in Viet-Nameese, both texts being equally authentic.

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APPENDIX B

DECLASSIFIED
Final Declaration Issued at the Conclusion of the
Geneva Conference on Indochina, July 21, 1954.¹

Final Declaration, dated the 21st July, 1954, of the Geneva Conference on the problem of restoring peace in Indo-China, in which the representatives of Cambodia, the Democratic Republic of Viet-Nam, France, Laos, the People's Republic of China, the State of Viet-Nam, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America took part.

1. The Conference takes note of the agreements ending hostilities in Cambodia, Laos and Viet-Nam and organizing international control and the supervision of the execution of the provisions of these agreements.

2. The Conference expresses satisfaction at the ending of hostilities in Cambodia, Laos and Viet-Nam; the Conference expresses its conviction that the execution of the provisions set out in the present declaration and in the agreements on the cessation of hostilities will permit Cambodia, Laos and Viet-Nam henceforth to play their part, in full independence and sovereignty, in the peaceful community of nations.

3. The Conference takes note of the declarations made by the Governments of Cambodia² and of Laos³ of their intention to adopt measures permitting all citizens to take their place in the national community, in particular by participating in the next general elections, which, in conformity with the constitution of each of these countries, shall take place in the course of the year 1955, by secret ballot and in conditions of respect for fundamental freedoms.

4. The Conference takes note of the clauses in the agreement on the cessation of hostilities in Viet-Nam prohibiting the introduction into Viet-Nam of foreign troops and military personnel as well as of all kinds of arms and munitions. The Conference also

¹Text taken from American Foreign Policy, 1950-1955: Basic Documents, pp. 785-787.

²Doc IC/44/Rev. 1; reprinted in Report on Indochina Report of Senator Mike Mansfield on a Study Mission to Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, Oct. 15, 1954 (Senate Foreign Relations Committee print, 83d Cong., 2d Sess.), p. 27.

³Doc IC/45/Rev. 1; reprinted ibid., p. 28.

DECLASSIFIED

-210-
DECLASSIFIED

as a result of free general elections by secret ballot. In order to ensure that sufficient progress in the restoration of peace has been made, and that all the necessary conditions obtain for free expression of the national will, general elections shall be held in July 1956, under the supervision of an international commission composed of representatives of the Member States of the International Supervisory Commission,¹ referred to in the agreement on the cessation of hostilities. Consultations will be held on this subject between the competent representative authorities of the two zones from 20 July 1955 onwards.

8. The provisions of the agreements on the cessation of hostilities intended to ensure the protection of individuals and of property must be most strictly applied and must, in particular, allow everyone in Viet-Nam to decide freely in which zone he wishes to live.

9. The competent representative authorities of the Northern and Southern zones of Viet-Nam, as well as the authorities of Laos and Cambodia, must not permit any individual or collective reprisals against persons who have collaborated in any way with one of the parties during the war, or against members of such persons' families.

10. The Conference takes note of the declaration of the Government of the French Republic² to the effect that it is ready to withdraw its troops from the territory of Cambodia, Laos and Viet-Nam, at the request of the governments concerned and within periods which shall be fixed by agreement between the parties except in the cases where, by agreement between the two parties, a certain number of French troops shall remain at specified points and for a specified time.

11. The Conference takes note of the declaration of the French Government³ to the effect that for the settlement of all the problems connected with the re-establishment and consolidation of peace in Cambodia, Laos and Viet-Nam, the French Government will proceed from the principle of respect for the independence and sovereignty,

¹The member states are Canada, India, and Poland.

²Doc IC/48/Rev. 1; Report on Indochina, p. 29.

³Doc IC/49/Rev. 1; reprinted ibid., p. 29.

DECLASSIFIED

DECLASSIFIED

unity and territorial integrity of Cambodia, Laos and Viet-Nam.

12. In their relations with Cambodia, Laos and Viet-Nam, each member of the Geneva Conference undertakes to respect the sovereignty, the independence, the unity and the territorial integrity of the abovementioned states, and to refrain from any interference in their internal affairs.

13. The members of the Conference agree to consult one another on any question which may be referred to them by the International Supervisory Commission, in order to study such measures as may prove necessary to ensure that the agreements on the cessation of hostilities in Cambodia, Laos and Viet-Nam are respected.

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STATEMENT MADE BY THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE STATE OF VIETNAM
(FOREIGN MINISTER TRAN VAN DO) AT THE FINAL SESSION OF
THE GENEVA CONFERENCE ON INDOCHINA, JULY 21, 1954¹

Mr. Chairman, the Delegation of the State of Viet-Nam when it tabled its proposal,² saw an armistice without a partition, even provisional, of Viet-Nam through disarmament of all belligerent forces after their withdrawal into perimeters as limited as possible and by the establishment of a provisional control by the United Nations on the whole of the territory, while the re-establishment of order and peace would enable the Vietnamese people to decide its fate through free elections.

The Delegation of the State of Viet-Nam protests against the fact that its proposal has been rejected without an examination, a proposal which is the only one to reflect the aspirations of the Vietnamese people. It requests urgently that the demilitarization and neutralization of the Catholic communities, the Bishopsrics of the Delta in North Viet-Nam be at least accepted by this Conference.

It solemnly protests against the hasty conclusion of the Armistice Agreement by the French and Vietminh High Commanders only, whereas the French High Command does command Vietnamese troops only through a delegation of powers given by the head of the State of Viet-Nam, whereas especially many provisions of this Agreement are of a nature to be seriously detrimental to the political future of the Vietnamese people.

It further solemnly protests against the fact that this Armistice Agreement abandons to Vietminh territories some of which are still occupied by Vietnamese troops and which are, nevertheless, fundamental to the defense of Viet-Nam against a greater Communist expansion, and results practically even in depriving the State of Viet-Nam from its right to organize its defense by other means than by the maintenance of the foreign army on its territory.

¹The Geneva Conference, Geneva, Switzerland, Eighth Plenary Session, Indochina Phase, July 21, 1954, USVerbMin/8, pp. 347-348.

²On May 12, see ibid., USVerbMin 3, pp. 90-106.

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It also solemnly protests against the fact that the French High Command was pleased to take the right without a preliminary agreement of the Delegation of the State of Viet-Nam to set the date of future elections, whereas we deal here with a provision of an obviously political character. Consequently, the Government of the State of Viet-Nam requests that this Conference note that it does protest solemnly against the way in which the Armistice has been concluded and against the conditions of this Armistice which have not taken into account the deep aspirations of the Vietnamese people.

And the Government of the State of Viet-Nam wishes the Conference to take note of the fact that it reserves its full freedom of action in order to safeguard the sacred right of the Vietnamese people to its territorial unity, national independence, and freedom.

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STATEMENT MADE BY THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNITED STATES
(UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE WALTER BEDELL SMITH) AT THE
FINAL SESSION OF THE GENEVA CONFERENCE ON
INDOCHINA, JULY 21, 1954¹

As I stated on July 18, my Government is not prepared to join in a declaration by the Conference such as is submitted. However, the United States makes this unilateral declaration of its position in these matters:

Declaration

The Government of the United States being resolved to devote its efforts to the strengthening of peace in accordance with the principles and purposes of the United Nations takes note of the agreements concluded at Geneva on July 20 and 21, 1954 between (a) the Franco-Laotian Command and the Command of the Peoples Army of Viet-Nam; (b) the Royal Khmer Army Command and the Command of the Peoples Army of Viet-Nam; (c) Franco-Vietnamese Command and the Command of the Peoples Army of Viet-Nam and of paragraphs 1 to 12 inclusive of the declaration presented to the Geneva Conference on July 21, 1954 declares with regard to the aforesaid agreements and paragraphs that (i) it will refrain from the threat or the use of force to disturb them, in accordance with Article 2 (4) of the Charter of the United Nations dealing with the obligation of members to refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force; and (ii) it would view any renewal of the aggression in violation of the aforesaid agreements with grave concern and as seriously threatening international peace and security.

In connection with the statement in the declaration concerning free elections in Viet-Nam my Government wishes to make clear its position which it has expressed in a declaration made in Washington on June 29, 1954,² as follows:

In the case of nations now divided against their will, we shall continue to seek to achieve unity through free elections supervised by the United Nations to insure that they are conducted fairly.

¹Text taken from American Foreign Policy, 1950-1955: Basic Documents, pp. 787-788.

²The so-called "Potomac Charter" issued by President Eisenhower and British Prime Minister Eden; text ibid., p. 1707.

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With respect to the statement made by the representative of the State of Viet-Nam,¹ the United States reiterates its traditional position that peoples are entitled to determine their own future and that it will not join in an arrangement which would hinder this. Nothing in its declaration just made is intended to or does indicate any departure from this traditional position.

We share the hope that the agreements will permit Cambodia, Laos and Viet-Nam to play their part, in full independence and sovereignty, in the peaceful community of nations, and will enable the peoples of that area to determine their own future.

¹See Appendix C, above.

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-216-

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APPENDIX E

FRENCH-UNITED STATES AGREEMENT ON RECOVERY OF MDAP EQUIPMENT
IN INDOCHINA (Collins-Ely Minute of Understanding),
DECEMBER 1, 1954¹

1. Pursuant to paragraph 2 of the exchange of notes between the United States and French Governments on January 5, 1952,² and pursuant to paragraph 41 of the memorandum of understanding of March 1, 1954,³ the Commissioner General of France in Indochina and the Chief of the United States Military Assistance Advisory Group in Indochina will consult as soon as possible to establish procedures for the return to U.S. control of United States financed military equipment and materials which are no longer required for the purposes for which originally made available. Such equipment and materials include those provided in accordance with the Mutual Defense Assistance agreement of December 23, 1950,⁴ and under the program covered by the memorandum of understanding of March 1, 1954, as well as under inter-governmental contracts pursuant to the so-called Lisbon programs.

2. That portion of the above military equipment and materials which it is determined by French and U.S. representatives (EMIFT-MAAG level) are no longer required for the purposes for which originally made available should be offered for return to the United States Government or for such disposition as may be determined by the United States Government, and will be delivered by the French military authorities to designated shipping points.

¹From Saigon, tel. 1793, Nov. 10, 1954; To Saigon, tel. 2023, Nov. 18, 1954, both secret. This agreement on the recovery of MDAP equipment and the one which follows on training of the Vietnamese Armed Forces appear to be the only issues between the United States and France which Generals Collins and Ely resolved formally by minutes of understanding. Other matters at issue, handled less formally, were (1) strengthening the Diem Government, (2) resettlement of refugees and displaced persons, (3) land reform, (4) election of a National Assembly, (5) American financial and economic aid to Vietnam, and (6) American financial support of the French Expeditionary Corps.

²TIAS 2606; 3 UST 4559.

³TIAS 2447; 3 UST 2756.

⁴Attachment to Operations Memorandum from Paris, Mar. 3, 1954, confidential.

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-217-

APPENDIX F

JOINT RECOMMENDATION OF FRENCH AND AMERICAN GOVERNMENTS
RELATIVE TO THE ORGANIZATION AND TRAINING OF AUTO-
NOMOUS VIETNAMESE ARMED FORCES (Collins-Ely
Minute of Understanding),
DECEMBER 13, 1954¹

1. The undersigned consider as desirable the adoption by the Government of Viet Nam of the provisions of Annex "A" attached hereto relative to the initial structure of Vietnamese forces as they should be organized on 31 December 1955.

2. This force structure would be attained by reduction of the strength of Vietnamese Armed Forces based, as far as possible, on discharge of the least effective personnel, until the structure defined in Annex "A" is achieved. Some adjustments could be made in the rate of reduction in the light of the political and economic situation in Viet Nam.

3. The undersigned consider that the direction of a program in the fields of organization and training of autonomous Vietnamese Armed Forces in order to be effective should be entrusted to a single authority; and that, as far as they are concerned, full responsibility for the assistance to be accorded to the Government of Viet Nam in the organization and training of these Armed Forces should be assumed by the Chief of the United States M.A.A.G. on 12 February 1955 under the overall authority of the Commander-in-Chief.

4. American personnel would than be maintained concurrently with French personnel as advisers and instructors of Vietnamese Armed Forces. As the effectiveness of these Armed Forces increases, the number of French and American advisers and instructors would be progressively reduced.

¹Encl. 2, desp. 413 from Saigon, June 27, 1957, confidential.

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-218-

5. The undersigned agree that the above provisions ought to be applied in conformity with existing agreements.

6. The present recommendation will be valid subject to approval by the United States Government of a progress of direct aid to the State of Viet Nam.

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-219-

PROPOSED FORCE BASIS FOR FREE VIET NAM FOR CY 1956

<u>ACTIVITY</u>	<u>MILITARY</u>	<u>STRENGTH</u> <u>CIVILIAN</u>
<u>ARMY</u>		
Armed Forces Headquarters	2,500	
Territorial Divisions (3)	24,500	
Per Div:		
Div Hq & Sp Trps at		
900		
Split among 3 Div:		
13 Security Regt		
Hq at 200		
39 Security Bns at		
500		
Field Divisions (3 at		
8,450)	25,350	
Airborne RCT (1)	3,700	
Army Troops	13,950	
ComZ Troops	4,000	
Schools and Camps	5,000	4,000
Pipeline	5,000	
Reduced Pay Trainees	10,000	
TOTAL ARMY....	94,000	4,000
<u>AIR FORCE</u>		
Hq and Svc Elements	1,000	
Operating Units (1)	2,000	150
2 Ln Sqn		
1 Trans Sqn		
TOTAL AIR FORCE.....	3,000	150

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-220-

<u>ACTIVITY</u>	<u>MILITARY</u>	<u>CIVILIAN</u>
<u>NAVY</u>		
Hq Staffs and Services	700	250
Training School	400	
Ships Crews	1,900	
TOTAL NAVY.....	3,000	250
TOTAL ARMED FORCES.....	100,000	4,400

(1) During second year add 1 Ftr Sqn, 1 Trans Sqn, 1,000 men

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LIST OF PRINCIPAL OFFICIALS MENTIONED IN THE TEXT*

Achilles, Theodore C., Deputy Chief of Mission,
American Embassy, Paris

Aktal, J. K., Minister, Indian Embassy, Washington

Aldrich, Winthrop W., American Ambassador to the U.K.

Anderson, Daniel V., Counsellor and Chargé d'Affaires,
American Embassy, Saigon

Bao Dai, Chief of State of Vietnam

Bartlett, Frederic P., Deputy Chief of Mission,
New Delhi

Bérard, Armand, Diplomatic Counsellor, Office of the
Prime Minister, France.

Bonnet, Henri, French Ambassador to the U.S.

Bonsal, Philip W., Director, Office of Philippine
and South East Asian Affairs, Department of State

Buu Hoi, Prince, South Vietnamese Ambassador-at-Large,
with principal responsibility for Africa

Buu Loc, Prince, former Prime Minister of South Vietnam

Gaccia, Sir Harold, Deputy Under Secretary, British Foreign
Office, 1954-1956; British Ambassador to the U.S.,
1956-1961

Cheyson, Claude, former deputy political adviser to the
French High Commissioner in Indochina, trouble-shooter
for the French Government in South Vietnam

Chou En-lai, Foreign Minister of the "Chinese People's Republic"

*Each individual in this list is identified in the capacity
in which he appears in the narrative; in instances of several
capacities, dates are provided.

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Collins, General Joseph Lawton, Special Representative of the President of the United States in South Vietnam

Cooper, John Sherman, American Ambassador to India

Couve de Murville, Jacques Maurice, French Ambassador to the U.S.

Crépault, Alexander Raymond, Canadian Representative on the ICC in Vietnam

Daridan, Jean, Deputy French High Commissioner in Vietnam, 1954; Deputy Director of Political Affairs, French Foreign Office, 1955; Special Assistant to the French Foreign Minister, 1956

Desai, Manilal J., Commonwealth Secretary, Indian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1954, 1955-1961; Chairman of the ICC, Vietnam, 1954-1955

Dillon, C. Douglas, American Ambassador to France

Dulles, John Foster, Secretary of State

Eden, Sir Anthony, British Foreign Secretary, 1951-1955; British Prime Minister, 1955-1957

Eisenhower, Dwight D., President of the United States

Ély, General Paul, French Commissioner-General and Commander-in-Chief, French Union Forces in Indochina

Faure, Edgar, Prime Minister of France

Gromyko, Andrei A., First Deputy Foreign Minister of the U.S.S.R.

Graves, Sir Hubert, British Ambassador to South Vietnam, 1954-1956; Minister, British Embassy, Washington, 1956-

Gray, Gordon, Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs

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Heath, Donald R., American Ambassador to South Vietnam

Ho Chi Minh, President of the "Democratic People's Republic of Vietnam"

Hoover, Herbert C., Jr., Under Secretary of State

Hoppenot, Henri, French High Commissioner in South Vietnam

Ho Thong Minh, South Vietnamese Minister of Defense

Jacquot, General Pierre, Commander-in-Chief, French Expeditionary Corps, Indochina

Johnson, David Moffat, Canadian Representative on the ICC, Vietnam

Kidder, Randolph A., Deputy Chief of Mission, Saigon

LaChambre, Guy, French Minister for the Associated States

LaForest, Henri, French Minister for the Associated States

Lai Van Sang, Director of the National Police and Sureté, South Vietnam

Laniel, Joseph, French Prime Minister

Le Van Vien, leader of the Binh Xuyen Sect, South Vietnam

Lloyd, John Selwyn Brooke, British Foreign Secretary

MacArthur, Douglas II, Counsellor, Department of State

Macmillan, Harold, British Foreign Secretary

Magsaysay, Ramón, President of the Philippines

Mansfield, Michael J., U.S. Senator from Montana

Margerie, Roland de, Director-General, French Ministry of Foreign Affairs

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224
DECLASSIFIED

Massigli, René, Secretary-General, French Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Mendès-France, Pierre, French Prime Minister

Menon, V.K. Krishna, Indian Roving Ambassador

Merchant, Livingston T., Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs, 1953-1956; American Ambassador to Canada, 1956-

Millet, Pierre, French Minister, Counselor of Embassy, Washington

Murphy, Robert D., Deputy Under Secretary for Political Affairs, Department of State

Nehru, Jawaharlal, Prime Minister of India

Ngo Dinh Diem, Prime Minister of South Vietnam, June 17, 1954-October 24, 1955; President of the Republic of Vietnam, October 26, 1955-

Ngo Dinh Luyen, South Vietnamese Roving Ambassador

Ngo Dinh Nhu, Political Counsellor to the President of South Vietnam

Nguyen De, Chief of the Imperial Cabinet under South Vietnamese Chief of State, Bao Dai

Nguyen Huu Chau, Minister-Delegate of the South Vietnamese Presidency

Nguyen Van Hinh, General, Chief of Staff, South Vietnamese Army

Nguyen Van Tam, former Vietnamese Prime Minister

Nguyen Van Xuan, former Vietnamese Vice Prime Minister and Prime Minister

Parodi, Alexandre, Secretary-General, French Ministry of Foreign Affairs

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225
DECLASSIFIED

Parthasarathi, George B., Chairman of the ICC, Vietnam

Pearson, Lester B., Canadian Minister of Foreign Affairs

Pham Dang Lam, Director of Political Affairs, South Vietnamese

Pham Huy Quat, former Vietnamese Minister of Defense

Pham Van Dong, North Vietnamese Prime Minister and Minister
for Foreign Affairs

Pinay, Antoine, French Foreign Minister

Pineau, Christian, French Foreign Minister

Plimsoll, Sir James, Undersecretary for Southeast Asia,
Australian Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Reading, Marquess of, British Minister of State for Foreign
Affairs

Reinhardt, G. Frederick, American Ambassador to South Vietnam

Robertson, Walter S., Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern
Affairs

Roux, Jacques, Director, Far Eastern Section, French Foreign
Ministry

Sainteny, Jean, French Delegate-General in North Vietnam

Sebald, William J., Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for
Far Eastern Affairs

Singh, Avtar, Chairman of the Saigon office of the ICC, Vietnam

Spender, Sir Percy, Australian Ambassador to the U.S.

Stephenson, Sir Hugh S., British Ambassador to South Vietnam

Tezenas du Moncel, Robert, French Minister for the Associated
States

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-326-

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Tran Trung Dung, South Vietnamese Deputy Minister of
Defense

Tran Van Chuong, South Vietnamese Ambassador to the U.S.

Tran Van Do, South Vietnamese Foreign Minister

Tran Van Don, General, Chief of the South Vietnamese
General Staff

Tran Van Huu, former Vietnamese Prime Minister

Vo Nguyen Giap, North Vietnamese Minister of Defense

Vu Van Mau, South Vietnamese Foreign Minister

Williams, Lieutenant General Samuel, Chief, U.S. Military
Assistance Advisory Group (MAAG), Vietnam

Wilson, Charles E., Secretary of Defense

Wintrebert, Michel, Acting French High Commissioner, South
Vietnam

Young, Kenneth T., Director, Office of Philippine and Southeast
Asian Affairs, Department of State

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